THE DIALOGUES OF LUISA SIGEA

By NICOLAS CHORIER

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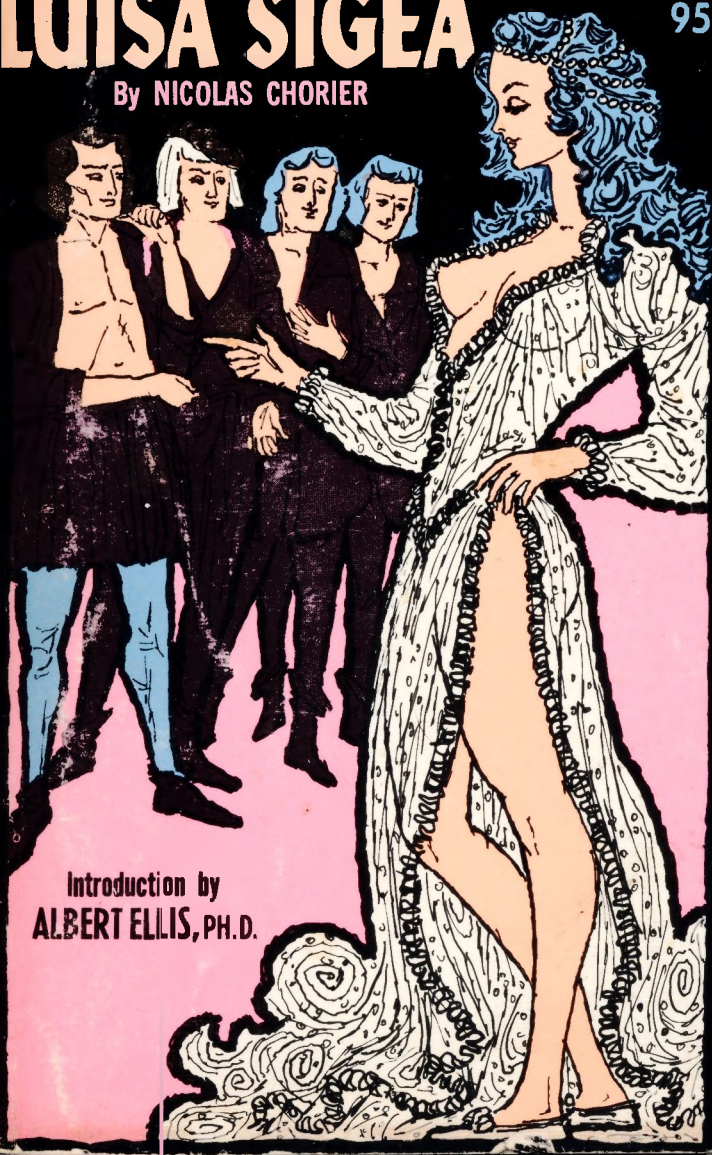

Introduction by
ALBERT ELLIS, PH.D.

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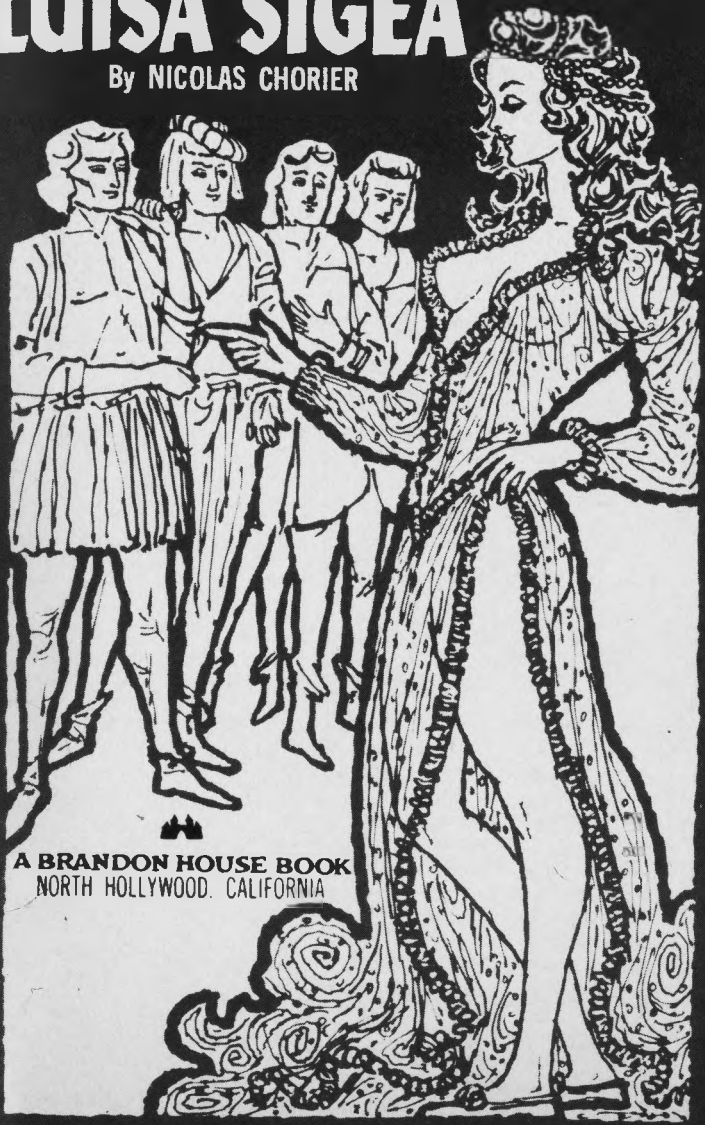

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INTRODUCTION

The *Dialogues of Luisa Sigea,* although relatively unknown and unread in recent years, is one of the erotic masterpieces of Western civilization. It has been called "the greatest of the Neo-Latin erotica" by no less an authority than Gershon Legman (*The Horn Book,* New York, University Books, 1964), because it was originally written in Latin, albeit by a Frenchman and published in Lyons about 1660.

Why was *Luisa* (or *Aloisia,* as it was sometimes called) written in Latin? Partly in order to escape censorship restrictions, which were already becoming rough in seventeenth century France. Michel Millot's pioneer erotic novel, *Ecole des Filles,* was published in 1655, and the author had the ill luck to find the unbound sheets of his book, together with an effigy of himself, burned by the police on the Isle du Palais in Paris. In order to avoid suffering a similar fate, Nicolas Chorier, the writer of *Luisa,* concocted a plot about its authorship that in some ways is more intricate than the stories he relates in the book.

According to Chorier's tale, the *Dialogues* were supposed to have been written by an erudite young girl, Luisa Sigea, who lived in Toledo, Spain, in the sixteenth century. Her manuscript, indited in Spanish, was lost, but had fortunately been translated into Latin

by a Dutch scholar, Joannes Meursius (who died around 1640). It was the Meursius translation, Chorier claimed in the anonymous introduction he wrote to the first edition of *Luisa,* that survived after the original Spanish work had been lost.

From the start, no one seems to have taken Chorier's fiction about his *Dialogues* too seriously — even though two centuries later M. P. Allut wrote a sober tract which vindicated the real Luisa Sigea and showed that she was a reasonably strait-laced woman who would never have had anything to do with such a salacious work. Legman believes that Chorier actually implied, by using Luisa Sigea's name, a hardly-veiled connection with a great French woman-poet of the sixteenth century, Louize Labe (Aloysa Labaea) of Lyon. Be that as it may, Chorier's contemporaries clearly suspected his authorship of the *Dialogues* and he only escaped persecution because he found a friend and protector in Due Gue de Bagnols, intendant at Lyons, who in addition to being a person of great influence, was also a patron of art and literature.

An able lawyer, Chorier at first made a substantial living at the Court of Aids in Vienne, Dauphiny; but when the suppression of the Court led to the ruination of his fortune, he moved with his family to Grenoble. He wrote numerous historical and philosophical books, which brought him much esteem, and as a result of the acclaim he received for the publication of the first volume of his *Histoire generale du Dauphine* in 1661, the Provençal States voted him an endowment of five hundred *Louis.* He lived from 1612 to 1692 and died a highly respectable citizen of his community.

Not only was the *Dialogues of Luisa Sigea* widely known during its author's day, but it has had many reprintings since, in Latin, French, English, and a great many other translations. Its style and its content have been much copied, and in consequence it has exerted

a considerable influence over the subsequent course of erotic writing. The first English erotic novels, such as John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (more popularly known as *Fanny Hill*), did not appear until a half century after it and the many other highly spiced Continental novels that were fairly common in the seventeenth century. In fact, many of the sexual errors (as well as some of the truths) which are dogmatically stated in Chorier's work have been copied willy-nilly by a host of subsequent amorous classics.

What are some of the factors that have made Chorier's novel lasting and influential? First of all, like most erotic works of fiction that are continually reprinted, it is well-written. Without resorting to any of the famous sex vulgarisms, or for that matter to any indecorous phrases whatever, the author manages to write in a consistently exciting, imaginative, variegated way. He clearly has great learning for his day; and his command of sexual synonyms and metaphoric references is so great that he is able to describe the common act of copulation in such diverse ways as to avoid what could otherwise be a highly monotonous narration. He is a true story-teller: knows how to interrupt one interesting tale with another and often to maintain maximum suspense with minimum effort.

Secondly, *Luisa* is to a considerable degree a sex manual in fictionalized form; and up till recently was not too often surpassed in this respect by non-fictional works in the field. As F. K. Forberg has shown (*The Manual of Exotica Sexualia,* Los Angeles, Brandon House, 1965), the ancient Greeks and Romans were well-acquainted with the arts of love. Chorier quotes profusely from their writings and incorporates much of their lore into the behavior of his main characters.

Thus, on page 61 of the present edition of *Luisa,* Callias teaches his wife, Tullia: "Now then, raise thy legs as high as ever thou canst, so that thy neat feet

may with thy heels drawn together fondly kiss thy exceedingly smooth buttocks." And Tullia goes on to relate: "I state that I do not understand the nature of the movement, which is new to me. He orders me to heave up the middle of my body: I heave it up; he orders the thing to be done over again with a violent jerk: I obey. In fine, he made my buttocks suppler than his own. So, seeing me sufficiently instructed, he begged me not to spare my flanks."

Not only coital movements are outlined in detail in *Luisa,* but other copulatory aids as well. Ottavia's mother, for example, brings her some sweet-smelling ointment before her wedding night with Caviceo, telling Ottavia, "Rub it on thy privy-parts: there is no better way of bringing them into action." Her daughter then reports: "So I put my two fingers into the box and carried them loaded with a lot of ointment to the hillock of my vulva. 'That is not where it is wanted,' said she; 'it must be placed inside, and not daubed on the pubis and surrounding places, as thou art doing.' She then greased the edges and the inside of the slit, by driving her fingers as far in as she could."

A little later on in the novel, Ottavia's husband also puts a pomatum on his penis, so as to lubricate it nicely and make it easier for him to have intercourse with her. Some of the instructions in this respect are very similar to those given in modern sex manuals; and it is a toss-up whether the advice in these manuals or in the *Dialogues* is more practical and useful.

One of the purposes of a good sex handbook is to explode many of the myths that are prevalent in this particular area. I was motivated, in this respect, to write my popular treatise, *The Art and Science of Love* (Lyle Stuart and Dell Books, New York, revised edition, 1965) largely to counter many of the extant sex-love misconceptions. Chorier from time to time seems to have the same motive. On page 223, by way of il-

lustration, Ottavia quotes the old saw: "They say that every animal is sad after coition." But Tullia, intent on saying a resounding No to this notion, immediately responds: "Nay, Rangoni expressed, by his cheerful countenance and pleasant jokes, how greatly rejoiced he felt for his having freely enjoyed my goods."

At the same time, it must be honestly admitted — and even carefully and cautiously pointed out — that *Luisa* contains numerous factual errors regarding sex. Most of these errors Chorier seems to have copied from previous works, but some of them he may have invented himself. He often refers, for example, to the uterus when he obviously means the vagina. He describes (page 40) "a sharp itching of voluptuousness" that women are supposed to feel when they are copiously drenched with an ejaculate of semen. He also assumes (page 70) that when the woman's vagina has drunk up all her husband's seed and her own secretion (which is erroneously thought to consist of seed, too), and when her vulva thereupon remains dry, she has undoubtedly conceived a child from the intercourse which has just occurred.

Like a great many writers of ancient and modern erotic literature, Chorier believes that at the point of orgasm women have an ejaculation that is very similar to that of males. Thus (page 222) Tullia describes her affair with Rangoni in these terms: " 'I behold the heavens,' cried I, out of my wits, 'I behold the heavens open;' and forthwith, on giving the fountain a free course, I let go the seed. He perceived that I was liquefying: so, stirring himself up, he came to my assistance with eager thrusting. One seed mixed with the other, for he, too, dissolved. While he, with his unbroken jet of scalding humour, kept raising all the pruriences through my reins in a general riot, I melted away four times into a copious tide." As Dr. William H. Masters and Virginia Johnson have discovered in their recent ex-

perimental investigations of coitus, the female vagina does indeed lubricate during the act of copulation; but there is no evidence that it especially does so at the point of orgasm; and there is therefore no true equivalent of the male's ejaculation of semen.

Various other errors are, understandably enough, made by Chorier in the course of the *Dialogues*. He notes (page 277) that women have a special passage in their bodies from which they can cast out the male's semen when they are already pregnant; that "the women of northern regions have not such wide [vaginal] doors. All their members are shrunk by the cold as if they were frozen" (page 286); that anal intercourse leads to the "most foul diseases which all the skill of AEsculapius would not cure" (page 288).

He also includes a good many sexual half-truths, such as Tullia's declaration (page 300): "Some state that the way to do love according to the prescription of Nature is, that the woman should bow herself down and extend her loins after the manner of quardrupeds; that the virile coulter is thus conveyed more readily into the female furrow, as well as the flood of seed into the genital field." Actually, as indicated by Th. Van de Velde (*Ideal Marriage,* Random House, New York, revised edition, 1965) and in my own book, *The Art and Science of Love,* the rear entry coital position is often excellent for impregnation, particularly when the male squats behind the female, since the cervix tends to be bathed directly in semen. If the male is lying on his side behind the female, however, entry may not be deep enough to aid conception; and the seminal fluid, in rear entry positions, may quickly trickle out of the vagina.

In spite of its expectable errors — for, after all, it has passed its three hundredth birthday — *Luisa* serves remarkably well as a source of sex knowledge. Like

most erotic novels, it gives a one-sided view and emphasizes the enormous pleasures of its female protagonists. This is an almost ubiquitous characteristic of such books, most of which are written by male authors for male readers, and therefore describe women as if they were universally interested in jumping into bed with the first comely partner who comes along and who depict them as easily having innumerable orgasms with each partner. Actually, as demonstrated in the studies of Alfred C. Kinsey and his associates (*Sexual Behavior in the Human Female,* Saunders, Philadelphia, 1953), only a small percentage of women are as eager for promiscuous and orgiastic encounters as are the heroines of *Luisa.*

Yet, like Cleland's *Fanny Hill,* Crebillon Le Fils' *A Lady of Quality,* and various other erotic masterpieces, the *Dialogues* have a distinct educational value, in that, when read by females, they tend to depropagandize women from the antisexual influences which are still all to prevalent in our society, and which often prevent them from fully surrendering themselves to whatever sex pleasures they are individually capable of experiencing. Few female writers—a notable exception being Rey Anthony in her *Housewife's Handbook on Selective Promiscuity* (Seymour Press, Tucson, 1960)—have been honest about their own sex lives or have written fully about the proclivities of other women. So Chorier's book was, and to some extent still is, highly educational in this respect. When Tullia notes (page 67) "I would prefer henceforth a day bereft of the light of the sun, than a night without the pleasures of Venus," and when she and the other women in the book describe in detail their sexual transports, it is difficult for a female reader to stop from thinking that she may be able to do likewise. This, of course, has its dangers: since some women may thereby be led to expect concupiscent delights that in fact they are not

going to be able to achieve. But on the whole, the influence of works such as these on female sex enjoyment is probably salutary.

In another respect, however, women will not and should not be pleased with Chorier's book, because it is typically replete with male supremacist views. In one passage after another, Tullia and Ottavia nauseatingly show how they are more than willing to be subservient to men, especially to their husbands. Thus, Tullia does not demur when her husband, Callias, says about her sex organs (page 58) "Knowest thou not that this part of thy person is no longer thine, but mine by full and lawful right?" And she states (page 114): "Every wife has a law-giver in her husband: every husband has his manners and desires. The more diligently the wife conforms herself to her husband's manners, so much the more enviable will be the life she enjoys. In fine, the honest woman is she who seeks her own pleasure in that of her husband." And Ottavia (page 217) asks her lover, Lampridio: "Am I satisfying thy pleasure, which forms my chief delight? Shall I put myself into a more violent motion? I shall do my best." The idea that woman's chief purpose in life is that of satisfying her male consort was, of course, notoriously held in the seventeenth century and still often prevails in our own day. Proponents of true sex equality, therefore, will find little solace in the pages of *Luisa*.

Advocates of sexual liberalism will also be somewhat puzzled by Chorier's dualistic stand. On the one hand, he is surprisingly revolutionary for his day, and includes many antipuritanical views and innuendoes in his book. Callias observes Tullia urinating in the night-vase, and when she tells him (page 74) "I am ashamed to have offended thy eyes with this nasty sight," he naturalistically replies, "Thou callest an object nasty, which, from the fact of its being necessary, can not be nasty."

Even more surprisingly, the respectable matron, Tullia, arranges for a foursome with her equally estimable friend, Ottavia, and with two of their lovers, Lampridio and Rangoni. When Ottavia hesitates to kiss Lampridio, who has arrived early, she says: "Come, Ottavia, why dost thou run back? This bed will be a tight fit for us four, when Rangoni comes: besides, nobody will have room in it, not even shame. Set aside such silliness, thou fool."

Tullia also tells Ottavia, with relish, of the day in Rome when she took on four lovers in turn, and copulated with them some twenty-five times in a single day. Ottavia, far from being shocked by this detailed narration, obviously thinks that Tullia has gained in status by having succeeded with this quartumvirate. One of the members of the quartet, incidentally, tells Tullia, when she at first hesitates to partake in the orgy, "Rid yourself of such childish bashfulness. You are not the first to be brought into our embraces: several very handsome aristocratic ladies have shared in our furies, as you shall do. We have found a means of respecting the brothel and of honouring lust" (page 228).

Some of Chorier's attitudes in regard to the multiplicity of sexual enjoyments and the legitimate use of various kinds of noncoital methods are also quite liberal and predict the permissiveness of most modern sex manuals. Thus, when Tullia warns Rangoni not to try to use Ottavia's "foul spot" — that is, her anus — for sexual purposes, he replies: "By Subigus! every spot of a pretty girl, as Ottavia, is delicious: for we are told that the whole body of a handsome woman forms but a single conch" (page 246). Tullia later concedes (page 270): "Yet, very clever men state that such an act is not too reprehensible; that the hind-grot forms a part of woman's body, just as the hands do; that there is, therefore, no more harm in it than there would be for a wife to handle her husband's

mentule. It would be wrong, however, unless the genital shower sprinkled the feminine garden."

This last sentence shows how ambivalent and contradictory Chorier's sex views tend to be. On the one hand, he can see that anal coitus might be perfectly natural — but only if it is used as a kind of sex foreplay, and the male's ejaculation actually takes place in the vagina. This, curiously enough, is the Orthodox Jewish and Catholic position that still reigns today: that any sex act between a husband and wife is permissible as long as it finally leads to penile-vaginal copulation with the depositing of the male's sperm in his wife's vagina. Although this notion obviously stems from Biblical times, when the prime purpose of intercourse was held to be procreation, and although Chorier's heroines are frequently engaging in adulterous relations where the last thing they would want to occur would be to become pregnant by their lovers, they still hold to the old Biblical credos and consider noncoitally induced orgasms as perverse and iniquitous.

In other respects, too, *Luisa* includes contradictory sex attitudes. Tullia and Ottavia, as noted above, are distinctly adulterous; and they both engaged in lesbian relationships before marriage. Yet they esteem technical virginity highly and would have felt utterly ashamed if their husbands thought them to have been deflowered before marriage. As Tullia says to Ottavia (page 50): "Surely, the chaste girl's mind is filled with great joy when she beholds her flower found untarnished, and the husband, too, rejoices exceedingly on discovering it so; for, in truth, dear maid, those that are real virgins, as thou art, as I was, have always the clearest proof of their virginity in that place where it resides."

In regard to marriage, too, Chorier's heroines display grossly contradictory attitudes. Tullia and Ottavia are not only adulterous, but sometimes in distinctly orgiastic ways. Yet Tullia notes to Ottavia (page 120):

"Marriage is, nevertheless, the supreme good for our sex; every love which the law of Hymen does not sanctify is baneful and degrading. Yet no existence is happy outside of love." This is the romantic attitude of the troubadors and their ladies of the middle ages: legal marriage is good and is never to be broken, nor one's lord antagonized. Yet love conquers all, so that if the lady is truly enamored of the troubador (or of another lord), she may justifiably carry on an affair with him.

In several ways, then, Chorier's sex attitudes are conflicting and at times hypocritical. He takes many of the same stands which I found to exist when I surveyed American mass media in both the 1950's and the 1960's and examined their explicit and implicit sexual philosophies. As I reported in my books, *The Folklore of Sex* (Grove Press, New York, revised edition, 1961) and *The American Sexual Tragedy* (Lyle Stuart and Grove Press, New York, revised edition, 1962), modern writers tend to present sex as both a nasty *and* tasty, a vicious *and* delicious pursuit. So does Chorier. He goes to great length to describe the homosexual anal relations of many ancient nobles and statesmen; yet he indicates how reprehensible these relations are. He continually has Tullia and Ottavia on the point of engaging in anal intercourse with their husbands or lovers: still, at the last moment, he somehow saves them from this fate worse than death. He threatens one sexual "abomination" after another; but manages to have his heroines wind up having "normal" intercourse, becoming legitimately pregnant, and remaining quite happily married to their utterly respectable and sexually redoubtable husbands. Many conceivable and inconceivable pathways of danger and disrepute are trod by the indefatigable Tullia and Ottavia. Nonetheless, they escape all evils — and wind up mouthing some of the damnedest puritanical nonsense ever written.

In any event, more power to Nicolas Chorier! His

Dialogues were indeed revolutionary for their own day and can still be read with considerable pleasure and interest today. It is good to see *Luisa Sigea* taken from the shelf of unavailability — where it has largely lain in recent years because it has seldom been reprinted in English, and at that in expensive private editions — and brought out in an inexpensive format. It is easy to predict that its former popularity will now be restored with the modern reader.

ALBERT ELLIS, Ph.D.
New York City, August 1965

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THE DIALOGUES

OF

LUISA SIGEA

OR

SOTADICAL SATIRE

on the arcana of Love and Venus

FIRST DIALOGUE

THE SKIRMISH

Tullia, Ottavia

TULLIA. Sweet it is to me, dearest cousin that thy marriage with Caviceo is finally concluded : for, the night which will make thee a wife in his embraces will, I assure thee, afford thee by far the greatest of all pleasures; provided Venus befriend thee, as this thy heavenly shape deserves.

OTTAVIA. My mother told me this morning that I am to be wedded to-morrow to Caviceo. And I see that the requisites for the pomp of this event are being prepared at home with great care : the bed, bed-room, and so forth. But, of ourse, these things cause less joy than fear in my soul; for, whatever in fine may be that pleasure of which thou, my dearest cousin, speakest, I neither know nor even imagine.

TULLIA. It should seem nowise strange that thou, at this age and so soft (for thou hast barely attained thy fifteenth year), dost not know what I, though older when I married, wholly ignored; that delight which Pompania used to promise and so loudly extol, having been tasting it herself since three years.

OTTAVIA. But what greatly surprises me is that thou shouldst wholly ignore it. Allow me to speak more openly now that I am on the eve of complete freedom. For, if the practice was lacking, which thou certainly hadst not, yet thy great learning must have disclosed these secrets to thee. I often hear thee extolled to the clouds in the most flattering terms, because thou art so skilled in Latin and Greek literature as in nearly all the liberal arts, that there seems to be nothing which thou dost not know.

TULLIA. My father had so much to do in this,

that, with the same zeal as most other girls are seeking after the reputation of being handsome and elegant, I was entirely bent on acquiring the honour of being a learned maid. And they that prefer to flatter than speak the truth say : she has not quite lost her time.

OTTAVIA. They who will not flatter say also : scarcely have esteem of virtue, good morals remained with those of our sex who were considered learned, even when they obtained this honour.

TULLIA. Would they deny I am chaste, while owning I am learned?

OTTAVIA. Ay; on no account hast thou won the admiration of all rather than that thy learning did not interfere with thy good and chaste morals; it has produced an extraordinary prodigy. But how could it be possible that the Muses, who are styled virgins, should be deemed hostile to the honour of virgins? Why are they said to corrupt our minds, they who are as the ardour of our souls, stimulating us all, men and women alike to grand and praiseworthy actions? Undoubtedly because men, from a certain haughty and silly malignity, envy us these resources of which they themselves are proud, by making us the victims of their jealousy. Men shun every poison and venom just as we do, whom they call the weaker sex, because the same pest which may take our

lives away, may take theirs away too. If learning is a venom and a pest for us, as they assert, how is it that so dangerous a thing, in order to be useful to men (for they do not deny but that it is useful to them), should change its nature all on a sudden? If learning is, of its very essence, a certain source of every evil and crime for us, how shall they drink out of the same source the nectarean waters of immortal glory : whilst we unhappy and wretched women shall drink a sort of sulphurous Stygian water which will excite us to those debaucheries, to which they drive us by their sway or lead us by their example? For I remember that thou spokedst thus on this subject a few days ago in thy conversation with my Caviceo. It is exceedingly nice of thee to have conserved until now that pure reputation of an honest woman, with that beauty which inflames even the coldest, with that learning which captivates those insensible of beauty.

TULLIA. Thou who speakest thus, thou who knowest that love inflames men's hearts, art not so simple as I thought.

OTTAVIA. Am I totally ignorant of what Caviceo's eyes, brow, in a word, his whole countenance so often told me, even though he were silent? I was indeed truly surprised at the unwonted fire of his kisses, when he made free with me eight

days ago; I know but too well what that ardour and fire meant.

TULLIA. Thy mother was absent? thou wast alone? thou wast not at all afraid of him?

OTTAVIA. My mother was gone out; but what was to be feared from him? Of course I feared nothing.

TULLIA. All he asked was kisses?

OTTAVIA. On the contrary, the fool took them against my will, brandishing his glowing tongue between my lips.

TULLIA. What sensation came over thee, then?

OTTAVIA. I shall acknowledge it : some heat or other hitherto unfelt passed through my veins : my whole frame was inflamed. He thought that a maiden blush bepainted my cheek; for a little while he forebore his folly and busy hand.

TULLIA. Go on.

OTTAVIA. I shall ever hate those roguish hands, from the very fact that they with their fire impregnated me, tortured and wearied!

TULLIA. A nice affair!

OTTAVIA. Why? having stuck his hand in my breast, he seized one of my paps, then the other; and, while he was handling each of them rather hard, lo he tossed me hover on my back in spite of me.

TULLIA. Thou art blushing; the deed was accomplished.

OTTAVIA. His left hand was laid on my bosom (I am stating how the thing was done), he easily overcame all my efforts : he next slipped his right hand under my petticoat. I blush, I blush to tell it.

TULLIA. Lay aside that ridiculous modesty; fancy thou art relating to thyself what thou art telling me.

OTTAVIA. Having speedily lifted my petticoat above my knees, he handled my things. Oh! hadst thou beheld his sparkling eyes!

TULLIA. So thou wast happy then!

OTTAVIA. Having carried his hand higher, he invaded that place which, they say, distinguishes us from the other sex; ay, it is now a year ago, and ever since a lot of blood runs from me every month during several days.

TULLIA. Bravo, Caviceo! ah! ah! ah!

OTTAVIA. O the rascal! « This part », he says, « will soon rejoice me exceedingly. Do consent, » my Ottavia. » A little more and I had fainted at these words.

TULLIA. What did he then do?

OTTAVIA. That part of me, thou wouldst scarcely believe, has a very small slit...

TULLIA. But inflamed, but glowing.

OTTAVIA. He thrust his finger into it, and, as the place could barely contain it, I felt a sharp pain throughout all my senses. But he : « I have a vir-

» gin, » said he, and no sooner said than, forcibly opening my thighs which I kept as tight as ever I could, he threw himself upon me.

TULLIA. Thou art silent? he put nothing but his finger in?

OTTAVIA. I felt... but what effrontery is mine to speak so much about it!

TULLIA. And I too, whom thou makest so much of, have undergone it, as thou. Nothing is more daring than a bridegroom, whom every delay exasperates exceedingly, until he gathers that flower of his bride.

OTTAVIA. I soon felt some hard and warm mass between my thighs. He forced me to open; with a robust effort he directed that thing against my body and that slit. But I, having mustered up strength, threw myself to the other side, and, slipping my left hand between us both, I laid it on that place where the fray was so furiously raging.

TULLIA. Thou couldst with one hand ward off so powerful a catapult?

OTTAVIA. Yes. « O naughty man! » would I say, « why dost thou annoy me thus? Let me go, if » thou lovest me : by what crime have I deserved » this torture? » And tears flowed from my eyes : but such was the state of my mind, that I did not even dare open my mouth or utter a cry to call for help.

TULLIA. Withal Caviceo did not even pierce thee with his lance? it did not enter into thy trench?

OTTAVIA. I seized it and held it aside; but unlucky event! I felt myself completely drenched with a regular shower like fire, and, naked as I was, wet up to the navel. I put my hand to it again; but, when falling on that sort of slimy fluid with which the mad fellow had flooded me, my hand recoiled from fright and horror.

TULLIA. Therefore he was neither vanquisher nor thou victorious, since he was very near carrying off a real victory.

OTTAVIA. Caviceo was far more agreeable to me since that day. Nor do I know the powerful desire that agitates my soul. I ignore what I long for, and can not mention it. All I know is that Caviceo pleases me far more than all mortals; I expect from him alone the supreme pleasure which I do not understand, as I ignore what it may be like. I desire nothing and yet desire.

TULLIA. I am luckily here to be to thee an Œdipus in these doubts of thy mind. What Ovid (1), the master and interpreter of Love, wrote of Biblis, is most applicable to thee :

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(1) *Metamorphosis*, book IX, from v. 456.

First, of course, she understands none of these fires,
Nor deems she is doing amiss in lavishing her kisses.
She does not yet know herself, and accomplishes no wish
Out of that flame, although fired within.
Nor does she dare, when awake, abandon her mind
To impure desires : being buried in peaceful slumbers,
She often beholds the object of her love, as also her body
Coupled to her brother's, and, though still drowsy, blushes.
Sleep departs, she remains a long while silent, and seeks again
The phantom of her rest, and in her perplexity speaks thus :
« Ah me! what design has the vision of the silent night upon » me?
» May it not be realized! Why have I conceived such dreams? »

I am ashamed of dreams : yet people love them; and, while the soul is thus amused at the phantom of pleasure, the senses melt away in supreme enjoyment. Thou art blushing? I am getting thee to confess and methinks I hear thee say :

Provided I tempt nothing of the kind, while awake,
May sleep often return to me under a similar vision!
A dream lacks witnesses, but not the illusion of pleasure.
Ah Venus, and thou, Cupid, winged son of so tender a mother!
What transports of joy I had in me! what real desire
Came over me! How I lay dissolved to the very marrow!
How I delight to think of it! however brief this pleasure was,
The night sped quickly by, being envious of my delights.

OTTAVIA. I shall not deny it : Caviceo is before my eyes day and night, and the expectation of ex-

cessive pleasure usurps all my soul. And ever since that day, I have ardently wished Caviceo a similar opportunity to the one which I unfortunately lost, being innocent and thoughtless.

TULLIA. What wouldst thou then do?

OTTAVIA. Thou thyself knowest. I should be now more learned and he more happy. I had not yet arranged myself, I had scarcely pulled down my clothes : he had hardly pulled in his shirt which was sticking out of his breeches, when my mother stepped in.

TULLIA. Woe to thee! for I know the woman's character and severity.

OTTAVIA. Yet she said nothing disagreeable to Caviceo or me. She asked, on smiling, what conversation we had between us? Which of us was the more in love? « For who is the more worthy to » be loved, I do not ask, » said she; « thou art, » Caviceo, and not thou, Ottavia : I think thou » wilt not hold the contrary. I should like, however, » since Hymen will shortly unite you (I hope it » may take place under favourable auspices), thou » Caviceo to love my Ottavia as well as thine, not » on account of her merit, which is no great thing » in her, but on account of thy own noble charac- » ter. You will both live most happy years in this » union of souls. »

TULLIA. But afterwards when Caviceo was gone?

OTTAVIA. She began to inquire what it was she had seen with her own eyes between each of us. I commenced to throw the blame off myself; but she pressed me to own the truth. I complained that he had almost assaulted me; that I did not know what he was up to, or what he was seeking; that I certainly had not sinned, as far as I was aware. She persisted in sifting me to know whether he had violated the integrity of my person : I said no. She warned me to be upon my guard against him in future, menacing me if I would not do so. « For, » said she, « my daughter, thou art to be » united to him in a few days; but be assured that, » if he receives a real enjoyment from thee before » then, he will either forsake thee altogether, or » else, if he chooses the reputation of being cons- » tant, he will look down upon thee with contempt. » Either of these alternatives is far more disastrous » for a well bred girl to endure patiently, than to » willingly undergo death itself. »

TULLIA. Ay, the man who chances to have the faculty of enjoying in early prime (for Caviceo is quite a youth) the person of his beloved one, the deed once done, this did not escape the Stagirite (1),

(1) Aristotle, surnamed the Stagirite, from his birth-place, Stagira, in Macedonia.

nearly always hates her with whom he was previously so mad in love. But I nevertheless approve of thy candour, Ottavia; and how frankly I shall likewise deal with thee, I shall so act that thou mayest have nothing to doubt. Thy mother begged me in person to disclose to thee all these hidden secrets of the bridal bed, and to teach thee what thou oughtest to be with thy husband, what thy husband will be also, concerning the things of this nature, for which men are inflamed. So, to teach thee everything in plainer language, we shall lie together to-night in my bed, which, would to God! I might properly style the sweetest list of Venus. After me, thou wilt taste a more agreeable bed-fellow than I have been.

OTTAVIA. Thou art jeering me, Tullia; away with such proposals, which do wrong my love for thee, a wrong which thine would not bear, if thou lovest me from the bottom of thy heart.

SECOND DIALOGUE

TRIBADICON

OTTAVIA. Thy bed contains us now, the same bed in which thou hast so often desired that I should pass the nights, when thy husband Callias was absent, not merely with thee, but even within thy embraces.

TULLIA. I have occasionally spent sleepless nights, because thy love, with which I have been wasting myself away, having entered all my veins, has consumed me as fire.

OTTAVIA. Thou didst love me? And thou lovest me no more?

TULLIA. I do love thee, cousin, and I am dying wretchedly.

OTTAVIA. Thou art really dying, thou for whom I would lay down my own life to save thine? What

sadness of mind is this? For I have no reason to doubt but that thou art in good bodily health.

TULLIA. As thou lovest Caviceo, so I love thee.

OTTAVIA. Speak clearly : what enigmatical discourse is this?

TULLIA. But thou also lay first aside from thee so comely, so handsome, so tender, whatever modesty is in thee.

OTTAVIA. When thou didst wish me to get into thy bed stark naked (and I have done so), such as I am to enter it, thou toldest me, the moment I am to be delivered to Caviceo's enjoyment, did I not sufficiently divest myself of all shame?

TULLIA. Indeed the Queen of the Lydians formerly said : « I have taken off my tunic and at the » same time laid aside all shame. »

OTTAVIA. I have under thy exhortation overcome my timidity, and under thy guidance mastered myself.

TULLIA. Give me a loving kiss, O fondest of maidens.

OTTAVIA. Why not? as many as thou wilt, and as thou wilt.

TULLIA. O divinely shaped mouth! O eyes brighter than light! O type of Venus.

OTTAVIA. And thou removest the blankets? I know not what I should fear, what I should beseech of thee, wert thou not Tullia. Here I

am stark naked : what else dost thou require?

TULLIA. O ye Gods! how I should like ye would grant me the power of playing the role of Coviceo!

OTTAVIA. What's that? shall Caviceo lay hold of my paps, as thou dost now? Shall he accumulate kisses upon kisses incessantly? Shall he attack my lips, neck and breats with similar bites?

TULLIA. These will be, my soul, the preludes to the fight, and the courses at the flowing banquet of Venus.

OTTAVIA. Hold off, thou art running thy hand over my whole person, thou art now thrusting it lower down. Why art thou fondling my thighs? Ah! ah! ah! Tullia. Pray why art thou fumbling that spot? Nor dost thou remove thy piercing eyes from it.

TULLIA. I am viewing this field of Venus with curious longing; it is neither wide nor spacious, but full of the sweetest delights; inexhaustible Venus shall herein waste away the force of thy Mars.

OTTAVIA. Thou art not mad, Tullia? Oh! wert thou Caviceo, I should be no longer in safety : for, astraddle on me as thou art, why dost thou want to inspect all my members behind and before? There is nothing in me that surpasses thy own beauty : take a peep at thyself, if thou wilt see something thou mayest both love and oughtest to extol.

TULLIA. I would be silly and not modest, were I to deny that I am gifted with some beauty; I am, moreover, in the prime of lite : I have just passed my twenty-sixth year (1), Calhas has had but one child by me. If any pleasure may be afforded to thy senses on my part, enjoy it : I do not oppose it.

OTTAVIA. Nor I either. Enjoy me as much as ever thou mayest, I consent to it. But I am well aware that no pleasure can accrue to thee from a maiden as I am, nor to me from thee either, even though thou really wast as a marvellous garden of all delicacies and attractions.

TULLIA. Thou hast indeed a garden, wherein Caviceo will feed his spumy mood on the most delicious fruits.

OTTAVIA. I have no garden which thou hast not likewise abounding in the same fruit. Now, what is it thou callest a garden? Where is it situated? What are these fruits?

TULLIA. I perceive thy roguery : of course thou

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(1) All editions bear : *Octavum supra decimum vix complexi annum*. It is clear Tullia can not be so young, being the playmate of Sempronia, the mother of Ottavia. As we shall see further on Fifth Dialogue (episode of Giocondo), Sempronia was twelve years old when Tullia was ten; now she is actually twenty-eight (idem, Recital of Ottavia's wedding night), which leaves Tullia twenty-six-years old.

who retaliatest on my garden, wast as well acquainted with thy own, as I with mine.

OTTAVIA. Perhaps thou designatest by this word that spot which thou art clutching in thy right hand, teasing with thy fingers and tickling with the ends of thy nails, to excite a desire in me?

TULLIA. That's so, cousin; having no experience of it, thou ignorest its use; but I shall try and make thee know it.

OTTAVIA. Should I learn it exclusive of my marriage, I would not be chaste, nor worthy of thy love, being then so unlike thee. But tell me what would that use be. First of all, stretch thyself in bed, because, seated up as thou art, thou art only causing both of us inconvenience.

TULLIA. I shall endeavour to satisfy thee. Now prick up thy ears : for the more attentively thou listenest to this discourse, so much the more easily and frequently will Caviceo erect. May Venus grant it! accept the omen, Ottavia.

OTTAVIA. I do accept it. Thou art in roars of laughter? I do not really see what harm there is in these words.

TULLIA. But thou shalt feel what delights I wish thy garden through this omen.

OTTAVIA. Thou art speaking to one deaf.

TULLIA. Venus grant that thou mayest hear and

comprehend! This garden of thine, which I hope may never lack the flowers and fruit of Venus, in spring or winter, is that spot, cousin, which a moss veils, with thee it is down, under the hillock of the lower belly; they call it the pubis. This down is a sign that, in the girl it first begins to bloom, her maidenhead is fit for a man and ripe for Venus. The Latins called it : *Cymba, navis, concha, saltus, clitorium, porta, ostium, portus, interfemineum, lanuvium, virginal, vagina, facandrum, vomer, ager, sulcus, larva, annulus.* The Greeks styled it : αιδοιον, δελτα, χοιρος and εσχαρα. Julia, the daughter of Augustus, was wont to say that she bore Agrippa children, resembling her husband as near as possible, because she never conveyed travellers in her bark unless it was already full. Εσχαοα, means hearth and chimney; χοιρος, a boar; δελτα, a letter so named among the Greeks, but the shape of this letter differs widely from the form of our garden. I hope, cousin, that thou wilt come from my embraces to-night more enlightened than if thou hadst been sleeping upon the Parnassus, so that thou canst make love also in Greek : thou hast learned it out of Juvenal.

OTTAVIA. I would rather be instructed like thee, cousin, than satiated with voluptuousness. When I consider how young and learned thou art, I should like thou wert Caviceo. How gladly would

I then lay before thee all the fineries of my person!

TULLIA. Dear maid, hug me, me who am mad in love with thee. Allow my eyes and handlings a free scope, everywhere it is possible. Caviceo will lose nothing thereby, nor thou either. Unhappy me! how vain are my efforts, accordingly as I advance! How madly I love thee!

OTTAVIA. Appease thy love and yield to that passion of thy soul. That which is thy desire is mine also.

TULLIA. Therefore, bestow this garden of thine upon me, that I may be its mistress : withal it would be useless to me, as I have no key to open its gate, nor hammer to strike it in, nor foot to enter it.

OTTAVIA. To be sure I present thee with it, being myself wholly thine. Do I own any right which is not also thine? Thou art falling upon me : what does it mean?

TULLIA. Pray do not draw back; open thy thighs.

OTTAVIA. So I have. Thou hast me now all to thyself : thou art pressing thy mouth against mine, thy bosom against mine, and thy womb against my womb : would I could entwine round thee, as thou entwinest round me.

TULLIA. Lift thy legs higher up, set thy thighs

over mine. I make thee acquainted with a new Venus, as thou art a new hand. How nicely thou givest in! Could I but command as well as thou obeyest!

OTTAVIA. Ah! ah! my Tullia, my darling, my lady, how thou art thumping me! how thou art shaking me! would those candles were extinguished; I am ashamed, having this light witness of my submission.

TULLIA. Look to what thou art about. Every time I bounce down, thou bounce up; imitate me in putting life into thy buttocks; heave them as high as thou canst. Art thou afraid of losing mettle?

OTTAVIA. Thou art truly worrying me by these repeated shocks; thou art smothering me; could I bear such a savage assault from anybody else?

TULLIA. Hold, squeeze tighter, Ottavia; receive... lo, lo it is spilling; my heart is burning, ah! ah! ah!

OTTAVIA. Thy garden is setting mine on fire; withdraw.

TULLIA. Cheer up, my goddess, I have been to thee a husband, my spouse! my wife!

OTTAVIA. Would to God thou wert my husband! what a loving wife thou wouldst have! What a fond husband I should own! Indeed thou hast even watered my garden with rain, I feel all wet by it: what filth hast thou spilt over me, Tullia?

TULLIA. Of course I have finished the job; and, love has, with wild impetuosity, cast the Venereal sap from out the dark well in my bark into thy virginal skiff. But has ever keener voluptuousness tickled thy senses, to thy innermost bowels?

OTTAVIA. Truly, I beg to observe I have experienced hardly any voluptuousness from what thou hast just done me. I was somewhat troubled on feeling thee so over transported, and a few sparks of thy flame lit up that spot, which thou wast bruising by thy frequent bounces. But these rather pointed out the conflagration than consumed. Now, do tell me, Tullia : does this humour of thine also usurp other women's souls, causing them to long after, and assail, little girls?

TULLIA. Unless they are stupid and have hearts of stone, they long after, and assail, them. For, what is more charming than a rosy and refined young lady, such as thou art thyself? Thus Iphis, before she was changed into a boy, burnt for Ianthe :

Iphis loves her she despairs of enjoying, and this but
Increases her flames; so a maid burns for a maid.
And scarcely retaining her tears : « What solution awaits
» me? » she said,
« Me whom an incomprehensible and strange love, a new
» Venus
» Masters. Had the Gods wished to spare me, they should
» have doomed me to perish; since they have not willed
» my death,

» They might at least mete me out a flame compatible with » nature.
» Neither a father's harshness, nor herself is opposed to thy request,
» And still thou must not enjoy her : and however things may turn,
» Thou canst not be happy, even though Gods and men set » to the work.
» To-day again my vows were all heard,
» And the propitious Gods have given me whatever they » could.
» What I wish for, both father, Ianthe and my future father in-law wish for;
» But nature, being more powerful than all these, is unwill- » ing;
» She alone is noxious to me. Lo the longed for time comes
» And the wedding-day at hand; and Ianthe shall be soon » mine :
» Not, it shall not be; we shall be thirsty in the midst of » waters.
» O nuptial Juno and thou Hymen, why do ye come to these » solemnities?
» Who shall lead as bridegroom, both of us being brides? »(1)

I must indeed acknowledge, Ottavia, we are nearly all of us great libertines. Dost thou hear the Petronian Quartilla? « May I incur the wrath » of Juno, if ever I remember I was a maiden : » while as yet a mere child, I got corrupted with » my playmates; and then, accordingly as the years » succeeded one another, I became attached to grown

(1) Ovid, *Metamorph.*, book IX.

» up youths, until I have finally arrived at the present » age. »

OTTAVIA. Up to this day, and thou art well aware of it, Tullia, I have been leading a chaste life in body and soul. Thou callest me a simpleton and a fool. But I already feel tainted with lust, and the desire of Venus. I am extremely grateful to fiery Venus that my wedding day is almost at hand; because I really think that, when men sleep with us, it is only in their embraces we can obtain a true and solid voluptuousness.

TULLIA. Thou reasonest well and thou shalt learn so next : may the Lampsacian entertainment make thee happy! But the swelling out of the belly, child-bearing and delivery usually follow the over free sports of men with us, and « *turgentis verbera caudæ* (1) ». Outside of marriage this passion which invites and urges little girls unto complete coition is wrought with dangers and misfortunes. On the contrary, everynthing gets on free and joyfully under Hymen. The newly married girl cover their heads with the same veil as they also cover all the crimes of their lust; under this veil, they conceal themselves the more easily from the sharp eyes of the law and the public.

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(1) Horace, Satire VII, book II, v. 49.

Therefore, Ottavia, maidens and those leading a single life must seek by another way that voluptuousness, towards which thou beholdst all species of animated beings, as Lucretius says, borne by an impetuosity which nothing, save the force of Venus, can soothe. It is then nowise strange that a maiden should be loved by a maiden : since even the greatest of Heroes formerly found in their own sex stimulants of their lust.

OTTAVIA. But thou who hast tasted a man art not a maiden; thou art free to enjoy entire pleasure. How is it thou art in love with me? that thou art seeking pleasure in that way by which Venus outwits Venus?

TULLIA. My friend, Pomponia, at first (for I will keep no secrets with thee) began thus, some years ago, to strain herself freely though licentiously with me, as we were very intimate with each other since infancy : no woman was ever more lascivious, or artful at the same time. My soul abhorred such a thing from the beginning; but by little and little I became accustomed to what I used to call a torture. Pomponia would set me the example, not only accommodating the enjoyment of her person to my petulance, but also ordering me, showing herself an exceedingly mild courtesan towards me, and a procuress towards herself. When I had at length made a long prac-

tice of this enjoyment, I could hardly get on without it. But, my darling Ottavia, since thou hast driven thy countless darts through my heart, I have been so transported with thy love, I am so inflamed with it still, that beside thee I look contemptuously on all things else, even my own Callias; and I fancy every pleasure reposes within thy embraces. Do not consider me on this account worse than others. For this caprice is rooted in almost every part of the earth. The Italian, Spanish and French women love one another : and were they not held back by shame, they would all rush headlong one against the other in rut. Formerly this custom was familiar especially among the Lesbians; Sapho enhanced this name, and thus dignified it. How often have Andromede, Athis, Anactorie, Mnais and Girino, her doties, worried her loins! The Greeks call heroines of this kind, Tribades; the Latins style them Fricatrices and Subagitatrices. But Philænis is looked upon as having invented it, because she hopelessly abandoned herself to this pleasure; and as having by her practice, for she was a woman of high renown, advised the women and little girls about her of the use of a voluptuousness unknown up to her time. They called them Tribades, because they tread and get trodden; frictrices, from the rubbing together of bodies; subagitatrices,

from the more violent movement. In fine, my dear Ottavia, it is the part of a woman, who is not silly and whose heart throbs within her breast, to act and be acted upon.

OTTAVIA. Faith! thou art saying queer things, but they are at least as funny as absurd. Consequently thou shalt have already gained the reputation both of tribade, frictrice and subagitatrice : but what name wilt thou give me?

TULLIA. My tender, sappy, lovely Cypris. At least I have meddled with nothing whereby thy integrity might be lessened, by which I might have broken in this little door of thine, in order to gather the flower of thy maidenhead.

OTTAVIA. How couldst thou, eh?

TULLIA. The Milesian women were wont to make themselves leather mentules eight inches long and broad in proportion. Aristophanes informs us that the women of his time were wont to use them. Even nowadays among Italian, especially Spanish as also Asiatic women, this tool plays a considerables role in the female boudoir, as being their most precious piece of furniture : it is held in the highest esteem.

OTTAVIA. I don't understand it or its use.

TULLIA. Later on thou shalt; but let our conversation turn to something else.

THIRD DIALOGUE

FABRIC

OTTAVIA. Ah! ah! ah! Tullia, how thou didst throw thyself madly upon me! Oh had the Gods but changed thee into a man!

TULLIA. Thy husband will, in the very same way, throw himself upon thee stretched with outspread thighs. He will besiege thy mouth with kisses; he will suck these plumpy paps; he will press his breast against thy breast; he will squeese, shake thee all over, but much harder than I could, as he is both stronger and far more lusty than I am. There will arise such agitation that the bed, in which thou wilt be lying, will creak, ay, and even the very floor. For, the first night Callias deflowered me, he went at it with such impetus, rush-

ing upon me with so much bodily force, that my bed was heard straining by those who were sitting up feasting my marriage in the next room. See, prithee, how I fared in that struggle, out of which I nevertheless came victorious.

OTTAVIA. What will become of me, if I chance to encounter so rude a champion? For thou wast older and thy person more developed, than I am now, when thou wast handed over to Callias' enjoyement : so I clearly see there is a dreadful torture awaiting me.

TULLIA. I will not deny, Ottavia, that thou hast to endure a lot of hardship; and were I to deny it, I would of course be making a sham of thy inexperience.

OTTAVIA. Carefully teach me whatever it behoves me to know. What will that suffering be like? how keen will it be, and how long will it last? Of course I would rather it were quick for a while, than moderate and enduring.

TULLIA.

> No, except the first night, thou wilt feel no pain :
> All suffering in love, if thou knowest how to bear it, is light.

OTTAVIA. To be sure I shall bear it, and that I hope courageously and resolutely. What else would

I do? But now what will I have to endure?

TULLIA. The Latins and our cotemporaries generally call that part of our person, about which we have already spoken, *vulva*, *cunnus*, *fregna*, *fica*, *potta*. *Vulva*, as if they meant valve; *cunnus* from *cuneus*, a wedge, because great force must be exerted to drive into it on the first assaults; or from the Greek word κυνος, as if that stench, which usually resides in a dog's mouth, were also the same as that residing in our nether mouth; or from the Greek κουνος, a word signifying beard, because silly fools jest of our being bearded in that place, styling the down, which envelopes our pubis a beard. Well, it rather comes from απο του κον νειν, which means to understand : as we are told *mentula* is from *mens*, so also *cunnus* is from *intelligentia*. But of course as the mentule is ruled by itself, as it would seem to be endowed with understanding, paying little or no heed to the authority of that understanding which resides in the head, so it both acts and understands of itself, raising up against the laws of reason a revolt, which may be appeased at the sole profit, not of the intelligence, but of the mentule. We ourselves call it by the more becoming name of *pudendum;* I have read in an old grammarian that its lips which enclose it are called *cadurda*. Into this spot Caviceo will first thrust his huge lance, with all his might; he will

in this moment cause thee great suffering, but, shortly after, still greater joys.

OTTAVIA. May the joys speedily, very speedily make the pain be forgotten!

TULLIA. Thou beholdest its marvellous structure. It first bulges out with a certain protuberance, which a light down covers with thee; and do not fancy it is concealed between the thighs for shame sake, of which it is utterly devoid, but it is set there for use. They style this protuberance the hillock of Venus (1) : whoever has once climbed it, my dear Ottavia, prefers it ever after to the Parnassus, Olympus or the sacred hills.

OTTAVIA. That I had a climber as pleasant as thou art! I should not then have to envy Parnassus its Apollo or Olympus its Jupiter.

TULLIA. There are two slits, the one under the other, through which this hillock opens to a full coition. They call the first, the large one; the second is the interior one. The former is suitable for bringing forth; we are indeed, Ottavia, as certain workshops in which the human race is manufactured. If it were narrower, the fœtus, on seeing the light of day, could not be extended without horrible suffering; it must be both extended and

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(1) *Mons Veneris.*

dilated. When youths are allowed to make free with this place, they fancy little girls and women are really as wide inwardly as they are at this outer gate, and I have seen some that were stupefied, the jacks. But the inner one is narrower; I have already stated that the lips which cover the edges of the broader slit are called *cadurda*. Inside this slit, namely, the more hidden one, there are wings; they are very prominent in me : these they call nymphs. But in maidens, such as thou art, there rise four sorts of little valves under the wings. These stop up the way to the uterus, which man, in his first encounters, does not free to his lustful desire without a deal of force and trouble.

OTTAVIA. I anticipate it; so the severity of the whole pain will consist in that effort thou hast been speaking of.

TULLIA. Allow me to finish my description. As these four membranes are joined together, they end in a pipe somewhat in the shape of a clove. But they do not run, as if drawn, over the cross route of the uterus : being erect, they shoot forward towards the outer gate of the garden; they occasionally gape, however, in an upward direction; the excretions which nature forces out of our bodies are ejected by this route. But I have forgotten to speak about the *clitoris*. This is a membranous body situated almost at the bottom of the pubis,

and replaces a kind of cod. It stiffens up, as if it were a cod, at any amorous desire; it inflames rather sensitive natured women with so keen an itching that, if excited unto pleasure by drawing the hand near it, they generally spill of their own free will, without awaiting a rider. Of course I have experienced this pretty often whilst Callias is sprinkling me with his lubricities, whilst he is fondling me and toying with the thing itself. A copious dewy sap falls from my garden into his hands, whilst he is playing too freely in these localities. Hence the rich harvest of gibes he has to fling at me, and the wide plain for jesting. But how can I help it? He breaks out in loud mirth, I simply laugh. I chide him for his anger, he rebukes me for my wantonness : so we are each the laughing-stock of the other, and while thus bickering, he bounces in good earnest upon me, lays me flat whether I will or no, bestrides me stretched on the bed, and playing the wag because my garden had dropped that moisture, he gives me back a lot out of his own, that I may not have to complain for having lost any through his fault.

OTTAVIA. You are both leading a happy life and full of delights; you amply suffice for each other's happiness.

TULLIA. Well, that road extending from the entrance to the bottom of the garden is called the

sheath; the rod is introduced into it, the moment the woman receives the shock. Doctors term it at one time collar, neck of the uterus, at another, bosom of pudency. Now, it envelops, squeezes and sucks the virile member, once driven into, and set in, this sheath. It is, Ottavia, a kind of tube through which the human race passes from the utter darkness of nothing to the light of day.

OTTAVIA. Thou describest the thing so well, that methinks I behold in person all that is concealed in my innermost bowels, as if it were placed before my eyes.

TULLIA. This inner slit, cousin, and that winding passage which precedes it, are narrower in thee than in me. Well now, I long to thoroughly scrutinize these things with steadfast gaze : spread thy legs out as wide as ever thou canst conveniently do so.

OTTAVIA. Here they are open; what design hast thou then upon me with these naughty eyes of thine? Thou art pulling these lips over on each side with thy fingers : what dost thou see inside?

TULLIA. Sweet maid! I behold a flower; whoever will see it will prefer it to every other flower and smell.

OTTAVIA. Ah! Tullia, pray do withdraw thy lewd hand; take away that cursed finger, which thou

art sticking into me. Thou hast really caused me pain by poking it in so far.

TULLIA. I pity thee, O precious conch, fitter for conceiving Venus than was that conch out of which we are told Venus sprung! Under what lucky auspices Caviceo was born, he to whom a new Venus will spring from this conch!

OTTAVIA. And still thou sayest thou pitiest me.

TULLIA. Ay, I behold thee going to be lacerated in a deplorable way.

OTTAVIA. What will become of it? Why dost thou wonder?

TULLIA. As thy garden is opened by a very small gate, as it presents a narrow inlet, I fear, too, that there desolves on Caviceo a task which, however acceptable it be, will be more burdensome than pleasing. Thou hast seen his catapult with which he is to cleave this redoubt of thine?

OTTAVIA. I have not seen it; but, by Castor! I felt it, such as they figure the club of Hercules, fat, stiff, and of respectable length.

TULLIA. Thy mother told me that he was admirably well furnished, so she is exceedingly glad of it; she thinks there is not a single man in our town better set off than he. I answered her, while thus bragging, that my husband, Callias' dagger, was eight finger breadths in length. She replied that he is a man of nothing at all, compared to Caviceo.

She pities and at the same time envies thee thy lot; she congratulates thee exceedingly on it. She says that Caviceo's tool is eleven inches long and as thick as thy arm, at the place it is joined to the hand.

OTTAVIA. O prodigy! And he will forcibly drive the whole of this monster into my person? Can I endure it? My heart is already sinking, as it occurs to my mind how many calamities are awaiting wretched me.

Tullia. Yet, do not lose heart. Callias yields it in length to Caviceo : but, as to thickness, Caviceo certainly does not surpass Callias. For thou seest this arm of mine?

OTTAVIA. I do, by Pollux! I should be blind if I did not see it.

TULLIA. His dagger swells out as big as this, when it gets angry with me; well, now this dagger fits nicely in my sheath.

OTTAVIA. I should like then to know what that victorious and fulminating sheath of thine resembles.

TULLIA. Fleas differ not more widely from chicks than mine from thine. Here it is, inspect, view, explore.

OTTAVIA. Throw thyself on the bed, and get upon thy back; for I can not see properly when thou art seated.

TULLIA. I am stretched; examine everything closely. It will be of use to thee as well as a pleasure for me.

OTTAVIA. I behold a chasm! it is like the one which engulfed Curtius, swallowing him down loaded with his arms and mounted on his steed! I shall put my hand to it and pull the edges aside; indeed I might easily thrust the whole of my fist in, if I wished. I am pleased with putting my finger in, since it is that of Venus, to run it over all this plain however vast it is, and ascertain its breadth, depth and ease for the rod. Well! it would suit Priapus himself, ah! ah! ah! or anybody else better supplied than Priapus. But a nasty wind rises to my nose :

. . . . . Like the effluvium issuing
From out dark gorges, strikes one's nose with its rankness.

What bad smelling flowers this garden of thine bears! Venus would be displeased to have a garland or a crown made for her out of them.

TULLIA. Thou art merry, dear maid, and art jesting. Thou, too, wilt be as I am now, and that within a few months after thy child-bed; and thou wilt have an immense opening, as thou beholdest in me; this lower fundament of thy uterus will gape, as mine is gaping now; thou, whose breathing is as pure in this mouth as in the other, wilt stifle my nose with

a noxious smell, and thou wilt infect my hand, if it touches thee. These are the inconveniences of marriage, they are the overplus of our pleasures. Ay, it will be so, doubt it not.

OTTAVIA. How may that be? I long to know.

TULLIA. When that member of man has developed to its full size, it penetrates our person with such rage that it sullies, contaminates and pollutes the whole local.

OTTAVIA. But be not unmindful of thy promises.

TULLIA. I understand what thou requestest. I am coming to the question. Now, those women who love and have had experience, brag in different tones of that virile part which is so intractable and hasty; none has tasted it without loving it.

OTTAVIA. I shall be therefore mad in love with it, when I have tasted it.

TULLIA. Wonderfully so. The Latins call it *veretrum, mentula, penis, phallus, taurus, machœra, pessulus, peculium, vas, vasculum, pomum, nervus, hasta, trabs, palus, muto, verpa, colei, scapus, caulis, virga, pilum, fascinum, cauda, mutinus, noctuinus, columna*, titles taken partly in their proper sense, partly in a figurative sense. The Greeks have also a varied vocabulary : they style it φλεψ, κανλος, γονιυη, ουρα, κριθη, πεος, σαθη, ευδολον, σηυα, συριγζ, καπρος, τυλος, κωλη, ραψη, αναγκαιον, αφιδος. Outside

the Venereal act, man's nerve lies inert and hanging; but for this act it stiffens, swells out, rages, increasing to such a size that it first strikes into us desperate awe; it soon causes maidens a keen pain, but afterwards the supreme voluptuousness of the deflowered one, which by far surpasses the fear and pain.

OTTAVIA. I am ignorant of the voluptuousness, nor do I care to know anything about the suffering; I feel but the fear.

TULLIA. Below the rod and adhering to its basis, there is a little purse; they call it *scrotum;* it is covered over and concealed by many crisped and shaggy hairs. The witnesses of manhood reside within it; and these are the beneficent witnesses of men's love towards us.

OTTAVIA. I have neither seen nor heard of these witnesses; explain what they are like.

TULLIA. They are two balls, not too small either, not quite round, but extremely hard; the harder they are, the more suited they are for pleasure. Owing to their being two, the Greeks call them « didym (1) », and many great heroes have borne this name. There were some to whom Nature, in her munificence, delivered one more, so that they

(1) Twins.

had three. Among these was Agathocles, the tyrant of the Syracusians, whom they surnamed on this account Triorchis. Under the same title is well known amongst us the noble family of the Coleoni, from which that Bartolommeo Coleoni, the famous Captain of the wars in Italy, sprang. All the heroes in this family nearly always present themselves at the duels of Venus with three witnesses, as they display the most daring courage on the battle-fields of Mars. Lucky are the wives they possess! For, there is in the windings of the testicles a sort of fabric of that ambrosial dew, which charms us so graciously, and cures so wonderfully the wounds which the virile member made on entering our person, so that they hurt us no longer. I am indebted to this dew for my little daughter; I also owe it all my joys; the human race is indebted to it for its existence. They commonly call it seed and sperm, the one of Latin and the other of Greek origin. Once this seed is cast into the female furrows, it is soon formed into a man. Of all animals, man casts out the greatest supply of seed; but those that have three operators engaged at it, as, for instance, Fulvio, the brother of my friend Pompania, flood of course the women with a still greater quantity than those who have only two. The fact is as I am relating it.

OTTAVIA. Perhaps Caviceo has also three : he

thus sprinkled me all over with a shower of that dew almost up to the navel, wetting my shift.

TULLIA. It would be shameful of a lusty youth enamoured of thy beauty, cousin, to offer a libation to thee and thy love, leaving thy vases dry. Let me go on with the remainder. This frothy, white, slimy liquor, the spittle of the virile member, is conveyed from the very spot it is cooked in, to the extreme top of the rod, and is then shot out with such impetuosity that it flies three feet away from him who shoots it. Therefore when the work is achieved, after much digging, it is cast so promptly into the bottom of the uterus that there are no women, unless they are of perfectly benumbed nature, but feel, once they are drenched by this burning shower, a sharp itching of voluptuousness. Ottavia, I can not sufficiently describe in words this enjoyment : thou wilt tell it to thyself in a few hours' time.

OTTAVIA. It is from the extreme end of the rod these milky rivers flow? I shall not indeed deny that he had a head, he who ceased to reside among the Lampsacians because he was too largely supplied, or rather to be near the goddesses, as I have learned from thee. But I was not even aware there was a head on men's members; I did not know that each man has two heads, fool that I am.

TULLIA. And those would be perfectly happy and fortunate, and would enjoy supreme glory among Heroes, had they also three feet! They call the extreme part of the penis, being oblong, head, *balanus, glans;* if thou squeezedst it between the tops of thy fingers, far from droing it the slightest harm, thou wouldst cause the most pleasing sensation. When thou wilt be burning, excited by thy lover, thou wilt induce Caviceo to satisfy thy Venus by no shorter way, even were he taken up by thoughts exceedingly remote from like desires. And this head of Priapus is covered with a cap : they call it *prepuce;* he scarcely ever takes it off, unless it be to salute and present himself bareheaded at his lady's court.

OTTAVIA. Thou art amazing, nor would I be ever satiated on listening to thee; would to God it may be so likewise with Callias sleeping beside thee!

TULLIA. My eyes are already closing with sleep; I am no good for bearing prolonged vigilance. And thou toldst me what thou hast said, only after having hinted that I was dozing during the conversation we had about these questions.

OTTAVIA. Pray, be not sleepy; listen to one that is beguiling thee so pleasantly.

TULLIA. By thy Venus and mine as also by Caviceo's! thou hast greater need of sleep than I; to-morrow night thou wilt not sleep a wink, in the

midst of Caviceo's embraces, kisses, squeezes, *subagitations* and madness. Repose thy body, so tender, so soft; prepare thyself boldly to meet this strife.

OTTAVIA. I shall do as thou wishest; but I care more about thy health than my own. Go sleep now, I shall not utter another word.

TULLIA. Give me a kiss : it will be my viaticum for rest.

OTTAVIA. I offer thee my mouth, lips, and my whole person; take of me whatever pleasures thou wilt, I am wholly thine.

TULLIA. O the kisses that Jupiter would envy me! O the delightful embraces! O the seducing handlings! Allow me to fall asleep so, with my mouth laid between thy paps, one hand placed upon thy garden, the other grasping those hard and compact thighs : as Mars was wont to sleep with his Cypris. When I shall be freed from sleep, I shall resume my discourse, and, with the same truthfulness as I began, I shall finish what remains over and above, darling maid, my lady.

OTTAVIA. Thou hast more spoken than is necessary; hold thy tongue and go asleep; do what thou hast to do.

FOURTH DIALOGUE

THE DUEL

TULLIA. I can not express how greatly refreshed I feel after so long a sleep; my limbs have reposed seven consecutive hours. And thyself, Ottavia?

OTTAVIA. As for me, I am awake since the moment that a horrible dream roused me from sleep, all frighted and trembling.

TULLIA. Relate to me the dream, please.

OTTAVIA. Tullia, methought I was with Caviceo strolling along the shady and verdant banks of the Po, under the spreading willows which were protecting us from the heat of the sun. Caviceo was importuning my ears and soul with his most plaintive strains, which he uttered out of love; he was suing for a tender kiss, I refused him; thou wast persuading

me to give it, so I gave it to him; he took it. As he was then slipping one hand into my bosom, while entwining me with the other arm, I could scarcely free myself from his grasp, owing go thy influence and thy teachings. Being disentangled, I fled, he ran after me; but, just as he was going to lay hands on me, I turned round... Ah! Tullia, what ghastly object do I behold?

TULLIA. Had wolves set upon Caviceo, were they quartering thy love? Had he turned the sword on himself?

OTTAVIA. Softly! he would rather pierce me with his own dagger!

TULLIA. O pleasant and witty girl!

OTTAVIA. I behold him changed into a most frightful beast, as like the Satyrs we see in pictures, as unlike himself. His body was covered all over with bristles, a pair of goat's horns shot out on his head towards his forehead, ending in sharp points. But the ears, forehead, eyes, nose and countenance were all like Caviceo. He threatened me with a javelin, twice longer and thicker than becomes a man fighting under Venus' banner; the rest of the body ended in a goat. He rushed at me, endeavouring to violate me, and approached his mouth to mine; in fine, so unusual a sight startled me. Now, what evil does it forebode me? thou, who art so learned, canst tell me.

TULLIA. I can indeed, cousin, and shall tell thee in its own time; but is it none of thy present business to know it.

OTTAVIA. Suffer me not to be any longer tortured with the desire of knowing, my lady, my spouse,

... if thou hast had any sweetness of mine.

TULLIA. This dream portends to thee, blooming and tender maid, the delicious fruit of another love; whilst it portends to Caviceo not grief, but the profaning of the conjugal bed.

OTTAVIA. Far from me such infamy!

TULLIA. It is a common saying, that those men whose wives allow themselves to be seduced by other men, out of indecent love and libertinism, pass into the ranks of goats and cuckolds.

OTTAVIA. I have heard so. Therefore I am to stoop to this baseness! I shall not grant the sole use of my person to Caviceo alone? I shall rather die than bring this dishonour upon me! Hast thou subjected thyself to another's lust? God forbid I should believe it; God forbid, too, that thou shouldst expect any such thing from me.

TULLIA. We shall talk over these things, dear maid, in a more seasonable time, when thou hast left thy maidenhead behind thee, and when Caviceo has

exhausted, bruised and ground thee day and night for several months. At another time, I dare say, thou wilt be of a different opinion.

OTTAVIA. Thou must have greatly changed thy mind, and art not now of the same opinion as when thou didst wed Callias, if thou judgest thus of me.

TULLIA. Who will make thee an opprotrium out of an irresistible necessity, if the fates urge thee unto the like folly, if they drove me to it? not even Minerva is proof against it. But thou hast seen nothing else in thy dreams concerning Caviceo?

OTTAVIA. Absolutely nothing. Being wide awake whilst thou wast fast asleep, I was revolving within my mind what thou didst unravel to me when speaking on the secrets of love.

TULLIA. This scheme is devised for thy Caviceo, not for thy mother who entrusted me with thy instruction. The more learned thou goest from my embraces into those of Caviceo, so much the more acceptable will be the fruit he will gather from thy love. But thou desirest to know what all this fruit is like, and I long to inform thee; thou shalt, after to-night, taste its incredible sweetness. Thou art already aware that he will plunge that javelin, which will pierce thee up to the seventh rib, into thy body, at the spot where the

two slits are, which I have described, between thy thighs.

OTTAVIA. Thou art humbuging, Tullia; how can that be? thou art on for jeering me.

TULLIA. Be that as it may, he will drive that dagger of his, by which he is a man, into this part of thy body, by which thou art a woman. Both sexes will be so confounded that, in this coupling you both will really seem to form but one. How all this is to take place concerns only thyself.

OTTAVIA. I long to know it, I fear to know it; I should like to be in Caviceo's arms, I fear for me when I shall be in them.

TULLIA. Having first thrown his arms round thee as chains, so that thou mayest not slip away, and being himself naked, he will most tightly squeeze thee naked.

OTTAVIA. Siser, speak to me now of Callias, how he used his right over thee when thou wast given to him for wife; because thou hast nothing certain to say of Caviceo.

TULLIA. I shall endeavour to comply with thy request, and thou wouldst be like a stone if thou didst not at least perceive from the game Callias played on me, when he snatched away my virginity, the kind of game thou art also to play with Caviceo. The incidents of so pleasant a night shall never pass from my memory.

OTTAVIA. All the people in the house are still asleep. The Sun, Nature's eye and the father of Days, appears to be just peering over the Earth; the eyes of mortals are swimming in silent slumbers and sweet repose; dead silence reigns every where. We are in perfect safety to chat and amuse ourselves.

TULLIA. Quite so. When my mother had put me naked to bed, she slipped a towel under the pillow at my head; she kissed Callias and me; she ordered Callias to give me a sweet kiss in her presence, as I lay all blushed; she then went away, locked the room-door, and carried the key with her into her chamber, where several of our relations were together, among others, my friend Pomponia.

OTTAVIA. Thou meanest her who was always thy chosen playmate, as she was about thy own age, as well as an intimate friend?

TULLIA. If thou only knewest the woman's grace, charms and wit, thou wouldst love Pomponia as much as I do. She had, a few months previously, wedded Lucrezio, a young man remarkable for the accomplishments of his mind and the beauty of his person. She had fully informed me about the whole of this affair; she had acquainted me with what I would have to endure in the first assaults, with what I should do and say; in a word, she so contrived that

I should ignore not even the smallest particulars which concern Venus. She had laid great stress especially on those pleasures of ours, which, by my Juno! very far surpass all others. Being, therefore, trained up and instructed, I awaited my rival with a courage nowise inferior to his, although below him in strength, if I could however rid muself of bashfulness.

OTTAVIA. But for what purpose was that towel at thy pillow?

TULLIA. Thou shalt see.

OTTAVIA. I am not surprised indeed that thou went naked to bed with Callias that night; I know my mother lies down naked with my father every night.

TULLIA. Forego awhile that longing of thine, to know all at once what is so important for thee to learn. I shall tell thee everything, but in its own place. When my mother retired and Callias saw me intrusted all alone to himself, in this list of Venus, he peeled off his clothes in such a hurry that he was stretched stark naked near me at the bed-stock, before I had time to imagine he was divested of his outer garbs. The room was lighted up as in broad noon by wax- candles set here and there. I saw a remarkable white body, full of sap. But when I cast down my eyes, as it were out of shame, I beheld his *penis* dangling remarkably

and magnificently; it frequently tossed up its head, as if the minister of my voluptuousness was rising by way of honour to salute me. Soon did he throw aside the covering in which I rolled myself up in bed, for we had celebrated our marriage at the beginning of June, and laid me bare to view. I tried with one hand to protect my breasts, with the other my garden, and keep them out of his sight; he began by forcibly removing both my hands, by fumbling my nipples and by seizing with his right fist the furrow into which he was just going to stick the plough In the meanwhile he surveyed with piercing looks the whole beauty of those charms throughout every member of my body; he stormed my eyes, mouth, cheeks, neck, breasts and belly with a shower of kisses. He then introduced his middle finger into my garden, on purpose (for he himself did not deny it afterwards when he had fully enjoyed me), in order to be more sure of my virginity; he trusted more to his finger than to the pestle : as it was too big and stout, he fancied he could not ascertain the truth by it.

OTTAVIA. Behold man's roguery.

TULLIA. As for that, one man does not differ from another. They are all curious alike; thou thyself hast had a trial of it with Caviceo. We must however forgive them this sort of suspicion. Surely, the chaste girl's mind is filled with great joy when

she beholds her flower found untarnished, and the husband, too, rejoices exceedingly on discovering it so; for, in truth, dear maid, those that are real virgins, as thou art, as I was, have always the clearest proof of their virginity in that place where it resides. That flower of chastity, which the Ancients styled Hymen and Eugium, denotes that she in whom it appears is a virgin; but the girl who should lack it, so that it could not be perceived in her, is indeed very far from being a virgin; if she has not given herself up to a man, her lust has undoubtedly supplied his office; being a virgin, she snatched away her maidenhead, having used violence on herself.

OTTAVIA. Thou hast succeeded in making me understand how a virgin may destroy her virginity.

TULLIA. I have still a lot more to add; but in its own time. When Callias perceived that my gate opened with so small an entrance, he clearly saw no man had as yet entered it; he threw himself into bed, embraced me, began to address me in the mildest terms, exciting me to love by the most agreeable jokes.

OTTAVIA. Thou wast silent, thou wast like a block, like a stone? thou who art so genteel, so jocose, so witty.

TULLIA. The sighs heaved from my rising breast

were in lieu of wards; I would repulse him, I would call him back; I would flee him I would draw near him; shame would extinguish my desire and then inflame it :

> . . . . . rage being bridled,
> It is thus irritated and swells.

Callias saw I was burning in spite of me. « Come, » my Tullia, » he says, « be not a stumbling block » to my happiness, which wholly depends on thee, » and on thee alone. Allow me, darling mistress, » to enter thy bewitching garden; do open to me » this home of Venus and Cupid. Here is the key. » He said this while grinning : and putting his left hand to his mentule, he begged me to take hold of it : I refused. « What art thou afraid of? » he says, « if thou inclinest to my supplications for my » own sake, since thou art wholly mine, and, what is » still better, thou art willing to be so. » — « I am » indeed willing to be thine, » I replied, « but do » not pollute me with this filth, that I may remain » deserving of thy praise. What love is this thou hast » for me, if thou delightest in contaminating me? » This love of thine looks more like hatred than love. » Have pity on me; let these tears touch thy » soul. »

OTTAVIA. Thou wast weeping?

TULLIA. A few slight drops fell from my eyes. — « Well now, Tullia, » he says, « if thou dost love » me, thou wilt have done with that untractable » modesty of thine for to-night. Dost thou dare, » while we are both here naked, commend thy » chastity any further? Henceforth, thou wilt » never be more chaste than when thou showest » there is really no ground for shame on thy part » in this bridal bed of ours, which would be oppos- » ed to thy duty and my pleasure. For my pleasure » ought to be entirely thy duty. I wish thee, mo- » reover, to be colder than ice with everybody else, » but more wanton than a sparrow with me. What » I therefore require of thee by reason of my right, » I will have thee do it by hook or by crook. » In the meanwhile, his tool had grown to an amazing size, and, being restless, would dash against my thigh.

OTTAVIA. Alas! I fear for thee; I shudder at the thought of thy wounds.

TULLIA. Thou art talking nonsense, thou silly creature; hear out a serious subject, gravely, as thou oughtest, if thou art wise.

OTTAVIA. Ah! ah! ah!

TULLIA. Briefly : having placed his leg inside of mine, applying it first as a wedge, he thus made way between my thighs for his whole person. He mounted me, pressing his breast down upon mine;

what could I refuse him then? this new and unusual weight inspired me with violent awe. He, while abating with one hand the fury of Priapus, applied the battering-ram to my gates, slipped Priapus' head in between my virginal lips, and, making a speedy charge, as if rushing from on high, dashed against me with a rude shock. He effected no breach, however, because the shelving of the rampart was too solid, the palisade very strong. At the first and second shock, he did not even penetrate the length of a nail in the intrenchment; but, at the third or fourth, I felt Priapus giving up the ghost and melting away. The ghost of Priapus is that seed, particularly sacred to our procreation and voluptuousness. It vomited fearfully against my gate, as a cataract that has burst through the floodgates. This was a kind of skirmish, and not a regular battle; I nevertheless felt even then a smarting pain in that spot, at these rude shocks, owing to the narrowness of the inlet, the pike having been thrust vigorously.

OTTAVIA. Didst thou refrain from shouting?

TULLIA. I did indeed heave a cry, and that loud enough.

OTTAVIA. But when thou saw that the work was no sooner entered upon than finished, didst thou shout all the same?

TULLIA. I held my peace on the instant, and

Callias jumping at once down, nimble and smiling, stretched himself beside me. But, having placed one of his thighs over mine, he fixed his lascivious beast so that it reached almost to my navel, and, falling drop by drop, it wet all this place. Then (according to my mother's orders) I took the towel, which she had put under my pillow; I first wiped Callias' tool, next my garden and belly which he sprinkled all over. While I was wiping Callias, he kissed me, chafed most violently, in threatening me with fresh assaults. But a great part of this liquor, which he had poured into the lips of my virginity, flowed over the sheets, marking them with stains that I could not get out. This over copious flood afforded him next morning a subject for much gibing, as if it was my maiden blood, the arteries of which had conveyed it all over the sheets.

OTTAVIA. But thou hast already told me that Callias' point had not entered thee very deep.

TULLIA. Thou wouldst have it sunk deeper in me? so it was driven into me later on, and a sight of blood issued from the wound it made. For Callias rested awhile after this skirmish. « May I die, » darling Tullia, » said he, « if I love thee not more » than my eyes, more than my life; never can » anything more beautiful be seen among mortals. » Art thou a goddess or a woman? How thy

» breasts swell in moderate proportions! how » firm they are! how nicely they are set apart » at a proper distance! » Well, he handled them, then assailed my nipples with kisses, seizing them with his mouth, bit them slightly while sucking them with his lips. This indeed stirred me up to voluptuousness, far more than I would have imagined, inflaming me with a passion which quite consumed me. He would now slip one hand in between my thighs, playing his fingers in the down of the *pubis;* now squeeze together the lips of my flute, then separate them, introducing his fingers inside one after another, thus goading me with all the stimulants of Venus. — « Take away », said I, « this incendiary hand of thine, withdraw; » why dost thou excite me? » He was in his glory because I owned I was burning. He snatched my left hand. — « I am lighting this Venereal firebrand » for thee, » he says, « it will extinguish the fire » it has caused. » So he orders me to take this firebrand; having become bolder by this time, because my desire had increased, I do take it. I could scarcely grasp it with my hand. I shuddered at its hardness, stiffness and heat. « With this wedge, » he says, « I am just going to break in that gate » of thine, so close and narrow. Courage, my » Nymph! thy mother handed thee over to me » in this hope of mastering thee; if, when she

» comes back to us, she receives thee as spotless » from my hands as she gave thee, she would ac- » cuse her son-in-law of cowardice, she would » reject me as a son-in-law, me who had not known » how to be thy husband. » — « I can not bear it, » I replied, « thou wilt kill me if thou wilt bury the » whole of so huge a weapon in my body. » — « Be thyself, » said he, « the leader in the struggle; » thou wield the whole of this tool with thy hands » in the delightful scope which Love and Venus » have laid out for it. » He begs me not to let it slip out of my hand; so I obey. He mounts again; I apply to my gate the ram which must enter by my influence; he hoists one of my thighs, between which he had thrown himself, having placed his hand under the other; I draw the tool to the gate; he begins to push most lustily. I bear up stoutly against the shocks, although several of them are most violent. I hold the tool fast and firm with my three forefingers, lest it might wander away from the straight road leading to my garden. Callias soon begins to excite himself more nervously, and brandishes the dagger at me with so much impetuosity that he drove it two inches into my belly.

OTTAVIA. Thou felt no pain?

TULLIA. I felt a most unbearable one. — « Thou » art up for killing me, Callias, » I cried, I roared

in a pitiful voice. I no longer roared, but yelled. This did not move him much. I thrust the dagger aside; he grows angry, and falls to rebuke me for the disgraceful and impertinent liberty I was taking, as he said. He finally compels me to put the weapon back into the place out of which I had plucked it. But I presently felt a milky shower, a sweet alleviation for the wound he had just inflicted, flow from that tube into my garden. The unbridled and furious organ fell languishing. I was afforded a short truce.

OTTAVIA. Did that shower drop into the further end of thy garden?

TULLIA. Not at all, sweet maid, not a single drop. It merely bedewed the outer edges. As soon as Callias alighted, he besought me to wipe him; he then began to expostulate with me. — « Tullia, » he says, « if thou didst love me, thou wouldst not » refuse, as thou dost, wretched me, who am burn- » ing with love for thee, the true fruit of thy love. » — « I do love thee, » I answered, « and am mad » in love with thee; but what wilt thou have » unhappy me do in this carnage? » — « Knowest » thou not, » he added, « that this part of thy per- » son is no longer thine, but mine by full and law- » ful right? why dost thou prevent me from freely » enjoying my own goods? Does it become one » versed in the belles-lettres, as thou art, my spouse,

» my delight, to be so careless about thy duty? For » it is thy duty not to quarrel with me about these » gifts of Venus. » — « Ah! Callias, » I replied; » indeed, if thou knewest how aggravating is that » suffering which thou causest me, thou wouldst pity » Tullia, if thou dost love her. » — « This suffer- » ing becomes and honours thee, » he added; the » keener it will seem to thee, so much the more » virtuous wilt thou appear; nor will the cause of » this suffering last long, whilst, on the contrary, » that which is going to succeed it will delight » thee immensely. Thou art, in fine, guilty of » not having received such a mighty supply of » prolific seed in thy furrow, by which, for sooth, » I might have become a father. Believe me, it is » a crime, nor does there exist a more infamous » one; thou killest voluntarily our children before » they are born, snatching away the life they have » not yet. Thy impatience is criminal and shame- » ful. » To his I replied : — « I do not wish to » enter into a controversy with thee on this sub- » ject; I own I am guilty : do forgive me; I shall, » henceforth be more submissive to thee; I shall, » in order to gratify thee, endure all pain with » unflinching will and steady body. » — « Now, » how daring it is of thee, my ducky, » he says, « to » fancy thou couldst be exempted from what all » women in every state of life, even including

» those that get married much younger than thy-
» self, must daily endure? Nothing can dispense
» thee with this imposition. Though skilled in
» Greek and Latin lore, yet thou behavest as if
» thou wert from the rank of idiots and ninnies. »
Thereupon I answered on smiling : — « Goddess
» Pertunda (1), help me! I shall resolutely be
» everything thou commandest me to be, in order
» to serve thy pleasures. But I clearly see I would
» be soon perforated, were Pertunda to lend a
» hand. » Callias roared with laughing, so that my
friend Pomponia heard him in the next room;
having suppressed his merriment : — « Now, » he
says, « be ready for this next onset; my truncheon
» is getting very angry with thee. When I throw
» myself upon this beloved breast, squeeze me in
» thy arms, let nothing make thee slacken thy hold;
» do exactly whatever I bid thee, if thou wilt have
» me for husband; whatever I ask and require of

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(1) One of the Roman Divinities that used to preside, with the god Domiducus, and the god Subigus, the goddesses Munturna, Virginensis, Prema, etc., over conjugal intercourses. « Have they not also a Pertunda in nuptial chambers to forth-» with help husbands in driving the spade into the virginal » furrow? » Arnobius, *Against the Gentiles*, IV. « If the god-» dess Prema interferes in order that she who is under the man » may not stir while he is treading her, what business has the » goddess Pertunda here? » Saint Augustine, *City of God*, VI, 9.

» thee, if thou wilt have me for thy lover. Now then, » raise thy legs as high as ever thou canst, so that » thy neat feet may with thy heels drawn together » fondly kiss thy exceedingly smooth buttocks. » I promised I would.

OTTAVIA. And thou kept thy word?

TULLIA. « Cheer up, » he says, « I would willin- » gly brave death for thy sake, and yet thy im- » patience baffles my love? So it is now entirely » in thy power, and wholly thy duty, to show thy » love for me in this conflict. » — « I should rather » incur Venus' anger than thine, » answered I. He interrupted me with kisses, and nimbly mounted me again. I raise my thighs as high as they can go, I hold unto him like a leech; he then sets the fire-brand at the door of the *lanuvium*, removes inside with his fingers the lips of the vulva out of his way, puts the head in, next drives at me with all his might, thrusting the bludgeon into the gaping quarter. The point got stuck at the first shocks : for I felt it had gone much farther in now than before. I thought I was split open; I broke out in a long ejaculation; the tears rushed abundantly from my eyes. Callias stopped a while : — « I » allow thee this interval, my Tullia, » he says, » here I have got nearly mid-way; look at it thy- » self. » He carried my hand to it that I might not suspect the verity of his assertion, and stated that

what still remained could be pushed in with little or no trouble, in case I should second him. About one half of the bludgeon remained out, but this was the thicker part. He then brandishes his tongue in my mouth, and at the same time makes the dagger enter my sore. I complain; I scream; floods of tears flow from my eyes. — « Alas! » said I, « thou art bent on killing me; desist a while from so cruel and so fierce an attack. » Yet I did not let go my hold, or stretch my legs. By this attitude of my person, I freed a passage for him. So he succeeded at last by a final effort to get the whole of the ennemy into my redoubt, but with a shock such as I had not yet sustained. This dash caused the bed to totter, so that those in the next room thought it was broken. Thereupon I fetched a cry, such as one would heave on receiving the point of a sword in the guts. — « Thou art mine, » he says; « from so chaste a maiden, thou art become » the most chaste of wives. Henceforth thou hast » nothing else to fear; the way is now cleared for » us, by which we may both go to our pleasures. » Having said this, he began to work his loins, nor did he any longer hurt me to such a degree as to give me ground for complaints. The moments he, felt the voluptuous crisis coming on . « Tullia, » he says, « I am just going to pour the Venereal » water over thy innermost garden; I shall give

» thee a kiss as soon as it spirts out. » He had no sonner spoken than he gave me the kiss; I felt myself drenched with a lot of warm blood from the bottom of my bowels; but, with the exception of a slight titling, I had no delight whatsoever. He testified by his repeated smacks, bounces and sighs, to the singular pleasure he had met with in that spot, where he had just driven his wanton yard. Having performed the work, he still remained on horseback : « I shall now counterbalance my losses » with this gain, my darling Tullia, » he says; » since I am master of the citadel of thy chastity, » I shall act the part of vanquishers. » — « Pray, » said I, « what do victors do? dear Callias, I am » here conquered and in thy power; it thou preten- » dest to obsequiousness, keep me in slavery; if thou » pretendest to honour, leave me free. » — « I shall » not evacuate so soon as thou imaginest the cita- » del, for the taking of which I wasted so much » toil,' and shed so much blood; I want thee to » understand that I have conquered, and thy dis- » mantled and ruined redoubt to acknowledge the » sway of my victorious mentule. » — « Of course, » said I, « I doubt not of its being dismantled and » ruined sadly, of the so narrow mouth of which » thou hast made a vast cavern, ah, wretched me! » I nov feel myself more open than a gate. » — « Indeed, » he says, « the less thou wilt open, the

» more I will suffer. » At these words I felt within my bowels Callias' mentule swelling, which, after having spat its venom out, seemed to become flabby and faint, being but a mere shadow of itself. He bids me cheer up, and asks me how I am; I tell him I no longer feel any pain. He was very glad to hear this, and he gave me a tender kiss. — « But didst thou partake of my pleasure? » — « I have partaken of nothing, » I replied; « what » taste of pleasure could there be in this cruel » struggle of thine, eh? what taste of pleasure » could there be? » — « Thou wilt presently change » thy language, Tullia, and own that there is » nothing so sweet among mortals as Love, » he added; « but aid me thou also with this work. » When I am driving downwards at thee, bounce » upwards and excite thyself as much as ever » thou canst; now if anybody can do this, it is » thou, being young, vigorous, blooming and ro- » bust. » I state that I do not understand the nature of the movement, which is so new to me. He orders me to heave up the middle of my body : I heave it up; he orders the thing to be done over again with a violent jerk : I obey. In fine, he made my buttocks suppler than his own. So, seeing me sufficiently instructed, he begged me not to spare my flanks. He shakes me vehemently; I bounce up still more vehemently; I make him reel with

my jerks. He fell on me with all his might : so I paid him back with all mine. I was on fire under his, he was splitting with rage; and we both, confounded in the continual movements of our groins, seemed to menace the chamber with ruin; the bed stook with such noise that it might be heard far and near. « My soul, my love, » said he, « how happy thou makest me! who on earth is » more blissful than I am! Lo, lo, my soul, I am » melting; the supreme pleasure is coming on. » — « I feel, » said I, « alas! what is that I fell, dear » Callias? »

OTTAVIA. Thou killest me with this conversation. Behold me dying in the anticipation of so much pleasure.

TULLIA. Callias squeezed me more tightly; he drove the burning weapon into my womb with such violence, that he seemed as if he would plunge his whole being into my person. At that moment a delicious shower poured into me, and at the same time I felt myself melting likewise, but with so great and so incredible a pleasure that, having no longer any motive for chastity against the goad of love, I willingly pestered Callias, harassing him with my sudden bounds, entreating him to make haste. Thus we fainted away, our sinews being as it were unstringed, both of us exartly at the same time. And I think that if Venus herself had assisted as umpire

at the conflict, she would not have known on whom to confer the laurel. We had scarcely recovered our breath, which the long rivality of the fight had almost taken away in this reciprocal race, when we heard the key slipped into the lock and the door opening. My mother and Pomponia rush joyfully together into the room; they close the door after them, and, that nobody may enter, push in the bolt.

OTTAVIA. Had not Callias secured thy door with a similar one? hem! hem! hem! And did not thy mother and Pomponia, for disposing of it, collar each other? hem! hem! hem!

TULLIA. How thou art merry, thou who shalt in a few hours feel thy door bolted with a two pound bar!

OTTAVIA.

> True; our mind scorns the pike, and even fancies
> That love it aims at cheaply purchased by the slit.

It is thyself that hast modified thus these two verses of Virgil. I shall, indeed, purchase Caviceo's affections and similar delights with my chaste purity. Follow out the thread of thy discourse.

TULLIA. Having quickly pulled up the clothes, with Callias had at the begiining tossed down to our feet, I carefully covered Callias' person and

my own, lest my mother's eyes might be shocked at this sight; I cared less for Pomponia, with whom I am as well acquainted as with thee. My mother ran to Callias' arms : « My son, hast thou » fought gallantly? The shouts of my darling » Tullia proved that thou wast victorious; I con- » gratulate thee and Tullia on thy victory. Hadst » thou not conquered, the bride would remain a » widow. » But Pomponia, having thrown her arms round me, was embracing me and sprinkling me with tears. — « How cruelly this butcher has treated thee! » she whispered in a very low voice. « On hearing thee, sister, bemoaning, I pur- » sued with my maledictions the unbridled lust » of the scoundrel. But how goes it? » — « Very » well, » I answered; « yet I arrived at the pleasure » I was seeking by an exceedingly rough road. I » reached the complete and supreme joys of life, on » passing through the midst of the pangs of death. » — « Thou art now a woman? » she added. — « As » for me, » said I, « I am one, and when I reflect » in my own mind on the enjoyments I have had » once my virginity was frittered, I wonder how » so much happiness can be sold so cheap. I would » prefer henceforth a day bereft of the light of the » sun, than a night without the pleasures of Venus. » — « All right, that will do, » she replied, « and » certainly the girl that does not enjoy those gifts

» of Venus, I guess she does not enjoy life while » alive. » And she ran at once to Callias, and gave him a sweet smack, calling him her Emperor, under whose standard Venus had so speedily triumphed over so pure and so hostile a maiden, after having slain the foes, Eugium, Nymphs, Hymen. Thou knowest that Pomponia has a great knowledge of literary studies. My mother handed Callias aromatized wine in a good sized silver goblet. — « This, » she says, « will warm up thy stomach and repair thy strength, my son; and if thou wilt » follow my advice, thou wilt rest thyself. Thou » hast acquired enough of glory last night in anni- » hilating by thy sword Tullia's maidenhead. » But she ordered met to eat three conserved nuts which she brought me, and whispered into my ear to prevail on my husband to go and sleep a few hours : his health required sleep and quietness after that wrestling. They both went away then. Pomponia, on bidding Callias good-bye, wished him fresh courage, and joy; and me patience at the work and an unflinching energy. In the meantime, while my mother and Pomponia were chatting, and while my mother was arranging the sheets and blankets, Callias, having slipped his hand underneath in the direction of my breasts, belly and everywhere he had fought so valiantly, ran over the field of Venus. So having recovered his

strength in less than no time, he called back Pomponia as she was going down stairs. — « I wish thou thyself to be a witness, » he says, « of the » cruel way I treat my lady, thy sister, butcher as » I am. » And, while she was standing looking on, he jumped upon me and drove his huge tool into the sore in my nether mouth. The wounds he had already made bled afresh, and now that they were pricked, I writhed under the smartest pain. — « Ah! my darling Pomponia, help me! » I cried, « fly to my aid! » But he began to toss me about and shake the bed by awful digs. Thereupon Pomponia and my mother ran out in roars of laughter. After a few to-and-fro frictions, and those of the most violent kind, all sense of pain vanished, and there succeeded a very keen titillation, such as I should not have imagined. I set to twisting my buttocks after the example of Callias astraddle on me. So, after having given me a sweet smack, he thanked me for this motion which I was now producing of my own free will, as it was the most pleasing thing I could do for him. This race was rather longer than the others. I finally felt myself, however, flooded with seed to the farthest recesses of my womb, and felt at the same time something or other trickling from me, which tickled me as a most agreeable itching. All my senses announced to me that nothing, however great and inebriating it might

be, could heighten this enjoyment. The act being over, he plucked out of my conch the inglorious charmer with its head now drooping. I wanted to wipe it with the towel. — « It's not neccessary, » said Callias, « my appendix is as dry and clean as » if it had not swum in this pleasure pond. » On the same instant, he laid his hand upon my skiff, and even drove his middle finger into it; he found my vulva dry, and not fuddled. « May the Gods » be propitious! » he cried; « thou hast undoubte- » dly conceived, my darling soul, in this onset. » This matrix of thine, which is indebted to me » for children, has drunk up all thy seed and mine. » Tell me, my heart : has not the enjoyment, » which thou hast just had, seemed to thee to have » surpassed every other pleasure that thou hast » felt in thy life? » — « It has, » said I; « but what » especially caused me a titillation of such incre- » dible pleasure, was the thought that it came to » me from thee, that these transports flowed from » thy body into mine; even this thought alone » has sufficed to overwhelm me with joy. » He kissed me; then : — « Rest thyself a while, darling » Tullia, » he says, « until I rouse thee to fresh » engagements and lade thy bark with new tok- » ens of joy. » Gentle sleep came over us, tired as we were, and, lasting three consecutive hours, it eased us. Callias, having woke, lavished a lot of

kisses on me, without rousing me, however, from my slumbers, I was so fast asleep. He again rolled the clothes down to our feet; he scrutinized me lying on my back, and presenting by my outspread thighs the circus wherein he had already glided five times on fiery wheels. He marvelled at the comeliness of my person, for the candles had not as yet burnt out; and, smiling, surveyed the broken texture of my bark. Being now enkindled by this sight, he rushes upon me; he thrusts the swelling mentule into the bosom of my chastity; my sleep is broken, so I open my eyes. — « It's all right, » he says, « thou art alive, wife; I was afraid » of having to do with a dead woman, as they » relate of Periander, tyrant of the Corinthians. » — « Thou shalt see I am alive, » I replied. — « Do let me see it, » he answered, while kissing me; « thou wilt never have done me a greater pleasure. »

OTTAVIA. What didst thou do to let him see thou wast alive? I rightly guess what thou didst.

TULLIA. Well now, what is it according to thee?

OTTAVIA. Thou didst twist thyself as much as ever thou couldst?

TULLIA. Right. Having tossed up my buttocks, I kept by my continual movement such good time with that of Callias, that, when he would be driving down the bolt into my hasp, I would be bouncing up. Thus

each fought moss to moss, brake to brake, with such ardour that, if Callias had had his source of seed at the very top of his head, I could have, nevertheless, drawn it down.

OTTAVIA. Was this contest long?

TULLIA. If thou measurest by time, three quarters of an hour; if by the pleasures, two centuries.

OTTAVIA. May such age of pleasure be often my lot!

TULLIA. Of course all species of living beings perpetuate their eternity by similar pleasures. Being tired out with such excessive excitement, I could no longer bear the toil. « I own I am worsted, » said I, « allow me to take breath a while. » — « Thou » surrenderest, thou layest down arms, Tullia? » he replied; « O thou coward! Come, pluck up courage. » — « I sue for peace, » I answered, « or a short truce. Thou art stronger and more brawny than I am, but do not imagine that thou art more courageous. » While I was speaking, he, stretched on the top of me, and

Counting on a last effort, brandishes the sword.

He fills my uterus with teeming dew, whilst a white slimy juice trickles from me. Both of us, unable to bear the intensity of the enjoyment, dropt into each other's arms.

OTTAVIA. That place, at the scene of the intestine war, did not pain thee any longer? I am very inquisitive : because, as I ardently hope for Venus, the fear of suffering has made me heartily sick. I am wavering

Between hope and fear...

TULLIA. Have done, thou silly thing; the pain is nothing compared to the joys.

OTTAVIA. Methinks I believe thee now, and my conch is itching me dreadfully.

TULLIA. Thou mayest scratch it in the meanwhile. Why shouldn't I scratch it?

OTTAVIA. Thou hast set me all on fire with thy conversation. Ah! ah! what art thou doing? Thou art working me into a delirium; pray, sister, take away thy adulterous finger. What else did Callias do to thee until morning?

TULLIA. At last, he was overcome by a very heavy sleep during two whole hours; I could not sleep a wink, although I greatly desired to do so. The candles were still alight; the idea struck me of opening the window looking over the garden. So I got up in my skin, opened the window, without Callias being waked up. I blew out the lights and, as I had a great desire to make my pooly, I took the night-vase in my hands and held it

under my slit. The urine, on falling, gave me such a scalding that I could scarcely bear it. When I had fetched sighs, the noise of my complaining broke Callias' sleep; he saw me, but did not stir; he stared at me, without my perceiving he was awake.

OTTAVIA. Thou hast been relating a very singular thing; thou madest thy water painfully?

TULLIA. Callias had ripped me open in such a way that the inner avenue, by which one arrives at chief happiness, was gaping an inch wide at least; the leaves of my flower were rumpled and disorderly; the tender chalice wherein my virginity nestled was broken : cruel rents abounded within. Thus this pain of the torn vulva, scalded by the urine, was as intense as if thou wert to pour salt steeped in vinegar upon a deep cut which thou wouldst have given thyself with a knife. The urine merely trickled : it did not shoot off in a continued jet. As I was now checking it in its falling course, now giving it free scope, Callias popped this question to me quite unawares : Is it still hurting thee, Tullia? » I flushed all over and speedily laid the vase down. « I thought thou wast as- » leep, my life, » said I; « excuse my rashness and » pertness; I am ashamed to have offended thy » eyes with this nasty sight. What! thou hast » seen me conversing with the night-vase? » —

» Thou callest an object nasty, » he says, « which, » from the fact of its being necessary, can not be » nasty. » So, after having lightly wiped my privy parts with a towel, I went back to bed. Callias took me altogether in his arms and thighs. He immediately kissed my mouth; he stroked my buttocks tenderly with each hand. He begged me to be so kind as to put my hand to his mentule and excite it to a fresh onset; I did not refuse to do him this service. It swelled out presently in my hand, and Callias, laughing, brandished the inflamed and stiff weapon several times over my navel. « What » art thou about? » said I, « art thou so wicked as » to fain plunge thy dagger also in the centre of » my belly to open a road to thy pleasure? Wilt » thou have me as full of holes as the casks of » the Danaïdes? » Callias laughed at the expression, and slipping his hand underneath, he lifted my left thigh, as I was half stretched on my back, upon his right side. « I wish to do it with thee now in a new position, » he says, « as thou art partly on thy back, » and inclining towards thy side. » He applied his mentule to the gate of my garden, and drove it in with one thrust. As the whole of it did not enter : « Thou art fresh at the business, darling Tullia, » he says; « submit to my teaching. » I answer that nobody could teach me this art better than he, that he was to continue, and that he would have a

docile pupil in me. He orders me to unite my pubis with his, that my slit may kiss the corresponding extremity of his engine : that in this way there would be a free passage inwards, provided I raised as high as I could the thigh I had thrown over his hip. I did so; and, wit a single drive, he buried the entire weapon in my vulva up to the hilt.

OTTAVIA. And it did not even hurt thee?

TULLIA. The repeated friction deadened all sense of pain. He desired me to hold his scrotum softly; he drew my hand gently to his testicles; I pressed both of them with my forefingers, and thereupon a mighty quantity of seed shot out into the well in my bark, and, brought on me, in the excess of my desire, an efflux. So we received our supreme pleasure form each other mutually. We had now carried on these games until broad daylight, and my mother had promised to visit us early in the morning. While we were conversing on different topics, exchanging kisses and warming our groins against each other, we heard her coming. « Let her come as much as she pleases! » said Collias, « she shall not, however, prevent me » from satisfying my desire in thy embraces. I » have proposed to myself, my consolation, to » subject this charger of thine » (he pointed to my avenue) « to seven rounds. I have achieved six

» rounds : there still remains the seventh, which » will fill me to satiety. » As soon as he heard my mother near the door, he mounted me again, and just as she was sticking the key in the lock : « I am » also, » he says, « sticking this key of mine in thy » lock. » He began to excite himself and to desire me to set my buttocks going. In the meanwhile my mother walked in; she was surprised to see the bed shake; I was so ashamed, that I caused an uproar with my complaints and sighs. — « What's » that I see, daughter? » she says, « the night is not » long enough for thee, nor for thee either, Callias, » to enjoy Tullia? » — « Excuse me, mother, » I » replied, « I would rather be dead than that thou » shouldst behold me in such disgrace. » — « I am » working out Tullias' happiness, for Tullia's sake » alone, » replied Callias. He shook me more desperately. Then my mother : « Obey thy husband, » daughter, » said she, « and above all be not asham- » ed to do so, as this forms the chief duty of a » bride. I am going out, but shall be back directly; » be eager, in the meanwhile, to comply with » each other's desire. » When my mother retired, Callias orders me to reply to his thrusts by rapid and frequent bounces. I began to ply my buttocks, tossing them up and down, accordingly as he would be drawing up to make an impetuous charge, or accordingly as he would be rushing down on mak-

ing it. He congratulated me on my spirits, and marvelled at my agility. — « But I wish thee », said I, « to praise the love I have for thee, as it is dishonour- » ing me by these commotions which thou art imposing » on me. Praise my complaisance even to abasement. » But look here, dear Callias! behold all my arteries » are teeming with dissolution; make haste with the » business! » He commenced to serve me more ardently

He goes and goes the way so often...

But nothing flows from his spout, as if the juicy spring was dried up with him. By kissing and sucking me, he excited me to come to his aid and accelerate, by the quickest course I possibly could, his arrival at the desired pleasure. I bounce, and by repeated jerks cause the amorous shower to fall into my impluvium, nor did he arrive at his ends until a long time after me.

When he had rested his weary limbs in my arms, he got up, and, having called the servants, he put on his clothes; he gave me a kiss and begged my pardon for his inactivity. This is what he said : « Pardon me, » said he, « this enervated flabbiness, » for I have run over a very insignificant space in » this delightful stade. » He had just said this when my mother returned, and with her my friend Pom-

ponia appeared more pleasing to my sight than the Sun, as she is a second light to my eyes. They both brought us bowls of broth with the yolk of eggs. My mother handed hers to Callias, Pomponia offered me hers; I drank it with pleasure. Callias pretended he did not want any; he swallowed it down, however. Then my mother ordered me to repose myself. « For I am aware, » said she, « that thou hast gone over » so much ground last night, that thou art in danger » of falling ill, if thou dost not take good care of » this delicate frame of thine. » — « We have run » seven miles in all, » replied Callias; it is very » likely indeed that she is tired; she bore me all the » way with the greatest swiftness. » — « We shall » talk over this later on, » said Pomponia; « rest » thyself in the meantime and refresh, by a sound » nap, thy weary limbs after the nightly toil. »

OTTAVIA. I see, sister, in this recital, a picture of all that menaces, I think, my virginal redoubt. But if my mind forebodes rightly, I shall have to endure more disagreeable ones than thou hast borne; but on the other hand, I shall have greater enjoyments tan thou hast had. For my nether mouth has a much narrower opening than thine had : the greater therefore will be the violence brought to bear on me; but Caviceo will work with an instrument three finger breadths longer than that of Callias : therefore, the further he drive Venus into the sanctuary of

Venus, so much the sweeter will be the fruits of Venus for me.

TULLIA. May Venus be as propitious to thee as to me, dear sister! I wish thee nothing more for thy perfect happiness. Let us rise now, sweet maid; thou wilt get up to-morrow as pretty a woman, as thou art a handsome maid to-day. I think thou art sufficiently prepared for that battle, which thou must fight.

OTTAVIA. I am. Indeed, I wish, moreover, to be praised for my constancy : I shall, without a tear, without a cry, endure every thing resolutely.

TULLIA. Take good care not to, my darling; Caviceo would scarcely be satisfied if thou took things so easily : thy silence would turn to shame. It is generally an increase of joy for the husband, and that of no small degree, when the assailed virgin cries and weeps while undergoing violence. They say that these cries are the voice of expiring virginity, while it is being split open. Thou canst easily suppose what may be said about it.

OTTAVIA. Thou warnest me in time.

FIFTH DIALOGUE

PLEASURES

TULLIA. Never was day more welcome to me, than to-night will be.

OTTAVIA. We shall say things as they come to our tongues. Cousin, I am going to embrace thee, ay, thee in whose arms all my senses and thoughts find their sweetest repose.

TULLIA. Well, I presume Caviceo did not lie thus inactive in thine. But repose and the highest degree of pleasure consisted for each of you in that rapid motion which thou keepest on by thy countless attractions.

OTTAVIA. I have met with those sweet transports which thou forbodest; so I had no trouble in arriving at that delectation, which certainly more than defrayed the cost of every sacrifice and which

sets mortals on a footing with the Immortals.

TULLIA. Surely, now that our room-door is shut, there is no obstacle to my being treated to that delicious food, which my ears have been awaiting this weary while.

OTTAVIA. Cousin, I understand thee; thou wishest me to enter upon the recital I promised thee.

TULLIA. Of course; what sweeter lot can be mine than that of becoming a partaker of the pleasures with which thou art englutted? Thou wilt by this description of thine infuse a part of these raptures into my soul, without in the least lessening thy overmeasure of them.

OTTAVIA. Would moreover that it was also in my power to pour into thy body those voluptuous floods which have been bearing my bark these fifteen days to the harbour of true use! and this wish I express from the bottom of my heart.

TULLIA. What a high mast, what a thick mast Caviceo must have set up in thy bark for such sailing! How thy tiny bark must have appeared to thee too small for so huge a tree!

OTTAVIA. Now thou art joking : Caviceo and I were made for each other. The redoubt he broke through on me deprived the victor of his victory : behold him now running away after having wasted his forces. As my mother saw him so extenuated, she advised him to go to an uncle's; he pretends

this journey is on business, but to tell thee the truth, cousin, his already wasted strength is the real cause of it, nor has it escaped my notice. This absence, which is to last a month, will repair his vigour : so the advice was certainly good.

TULLIA. What? thou so tender and so delicate a creature, didst not perish at Caviceo's first assaults? What do I learn? Thou who so speedily gotst the better of such a hero, art now become a champion. O victorious and laurel crowned conch!

OTTAVIA. Away, mischievous hand; thou debauchest a newly married woman by thy wanton touches.

TULLIA. Don't mind it, thou silly thing. What art thou afraid of in this bed of mine, which thou fillest with lust and burning desires? I did not wish to extinguish those lighted candles, in the hope that I might feast my eyes on the entire lustre of thy beauty.

OTTAVIA. But ought not the law of friendship be sacrificed to that of nuptial love? Supposing I were to willingly submit to what I was formerly wont to endure from thee, as I was then overobliging, would I wrong Caviceo?

TULLIA. Ah! ah! ah! what other objection wouldst thou make me?

OTTAVIA. What mean these fits of laughter.

TULLIA. An extraordinary cavern has swallow-

ed up that cosy cleft of thine, wherein thy virginity used to nestle. How infernally wide it is! What reproaches wilt thou have henceforth to make me?

OTTAVIA. Dear Tullia, I have nothing with which I either care or ought to reproach thee.

TULLIA. Spread out thy thighs.

OTTAVIA. Yes.

TULLIA. How this part of a woman differs from that of a maiden! Behold the lips disunited! Oh! the yawning pit! I might thrust the whole of my hand into it.

OTTAVIA. Ha! ha! ha! thou are over exciting me to pleasure; I feel on the point of melting unless thou stoppest. Wilt thou have me become an adulteress in thy hand, me who would prefer death than to be polluted in man's forbidden embrace?

TULLIA. We shall see hereafter. But for the present I shall do what I am at. Where is the man, Caviceo alone excepted, capable of filling this trench? Thou art not only far wider than I am, but even wider than it becomes a woman who would suit anybody except a prodigiously furnished man. Why, I am narrow beside thee, I who have been for so long submitted to men, I who have so often melted under their assaults, I whose bark has conveyed a child to the harbour of life. Cousin, I fear that thou, who art split up in this manner, art

henceforth become useless to all men for the service of Venus. So another man's mentule would be in thee as a dwarf would be in a royal yacht, were he to sail by himself.

OTTAVIA. That is nothing to me, provided Caviceo always finds me commodious for his pleasures, and, as thou saidst threee days ago, his dagger fits nicely in my scabbard. He carved out this stade for himself and his own use and not for others. Thou wilt be surprised at this : the last time he hugged me, he stated that he felt his mentule as closely pressed inside, as if I were to squeeze it between my fingers, and sucked so hard that he said he was dying of pleasure.

TULLIA. And what didst thou do?

OTTAVIA. I animated him with a shower of kisses, and by the active motion of my waving buttocks I helped him unto the mark.

TULLIA. But thou art beginning the recital which I long to hear, by the heel : I want thee to take it up by the head. I know that, if ever one of the most fortunate of women was toiled and moiled, it was thyself those latter days. Therefore, dear pupil, relate exactly all particulars and details from the hour thou wast married up to the present day.

OTTAVIA. I shall try to comply with thy behest : so, by my itching-like description, I shall distil into

thy soul, through thy ears, the pleasures which Hymen has poured into my body.

I had scarcely rose from thy bed, when Caviceo's parents, relations and acquaintances had already flocked to our house. Sure thou rememberest? Just as we entered the paternal roof, Caviceo with a cheerful countenance ran to meet us, and, with radiant and sparkling eyes, kissed each of us, then smiling turned to me : — « Here thou art, my » Aurora, » said he, « here thou art, my joy. Thy » mother would not let me go after you, so these » buttocks would have been punished for thee » (having lowered his hand, he was patting them), « I » would have chastised thee for thy slowness. Thou » knowest that thou art my Sun, and not instead of » the Sun; provided thou shinest for me, I shall not » have to envy the sky its Sun. » At these words, a crowd of persons came gathering round to salute us; the marriage contract was immediately signed, and the espousals soon over according to custom, and, as they say, in conformity to the set form of the law. So that, for the consummation of the nuptial sacrifices, nothing more was wanted, save the victim.

TULLIA. Thou stylest thy virginity a victim, without whose immolation, at once pleasing and delightful to each of you, the sacrament of matrimony would not be a sacrament.

OTTAVIA. These rites over, Caviceo and I were left at home, the company having dispersed. He began to ask me if I was willing to be his; I answered that I most certainly was, being no longer my own mistress. He fell to smacking my lips most fervently; he excited himself, be inflamed himself, he communicated his fire to my very bowels. I was entirely lost in him, and quite out of myself. The two maids appointed to be my companions kept close to my side, but turned their eyes away as coy damsels should do. « Send those maids out, » my soul, my hope, » said Caviceo; « what do we » want with them on this joyful day of our marriage? » — « God forbid I should be guilty of such » sauciness! » I replied. « What wouldst thou think » of me? what would my mother and the whole » house-hold think of it? » He stopped my mouth with a fresh shower of kisses, and then I felt the virile weapons strike against me. But exactly at this moment my mother came back to us. — « Well, » Caviceo, what dost thou think of thy wife? » she asked; « dost thou love her? » — « I think a lot » of her, » said he, « and am desperately mad in » love with her; nor could Love itself add any » more heat to my over burning love. But by all » the Gods and Goddesses that preside over, and » assist at, weddings! allow me, mother, to act the » husband, and, since it is your good will that

» I should possess so comely and so charming a » wife, do permit me to fulfil the duty of a hus- » band. » — « Add, » replied my mother, « and so » soft. Have some consideration for her tender age, » and take into account, son, how badly matched » she is for the onset which you are both just going » to engage in, she being scarcely fifteen years old. » Thereupon Caviceo becoming impatient at this delay : — « Mother, » said he, « have pity on me; » I feel myself wholly consumed by a secret flame » which my wife alone is capable of extinguish- » ing with the conjugal drug. Do permit me to » enjoy her now; if you refuse, you will be depriv- » ing me of my rights; be therefore generous tow- » ards me with my own goods. » She smiled. — « Now really, » said she, « these unruly fits of thy » passion are altogether out of place, they lack » dignity. Wait till night; that which is diferred » becomes only the sweeter. The fruit of love grows » more savoury by time, as all other fruit does. » So, my son, it is your business to see how un- » seasonable these entreaties are; I really wish I » could grant you what you are asking, but this is » no time or place for such a thing. Of course I am » not opposed to your pleasures, but have patience » till night. » — « Ah! mother, » replied Caviceo, « have pity on your son-in-law : indeed Ottavia » herself does not refuse to heal the wound she has

» made in my heart. » — « Dost thou hear? » said my mother, on turning to me, « wilt thou cure this » sickness? wilt thou serve him as medicine? »

TULLIA. Why shouldst thou refuse? thou art too wise for that.

OTTAVIA. I grew as red as a turkey-cock in the face, and this was in lieu of an answer; I lost the use of my tongue. — « Daughter, thou art silent? » said she, « and consequently thou consentest. » Retire therefore for a while; it is in thy inte- » rest that I am going to exhort thy husband. Go » to the other side of that room. » I went two or three steps further in, and pricking up my ears I was all alive to what they were about to say, lest anything should escape me. Then my mother addressing herself to Caviceo : « Son, » said she, « I have already stated that it is neither the time » nor place for consummating the marriage; this » you will not deny. Those of our kindred that » are to assist with us at the wedding-breakfast » will soon arrive; besides there are no couches » in this bed-room. However it be, I hereby place » Ottavia in your hands, on condition however » that she be submitted but once to your pleasure, » and that right-off. You may enjoy her embraces » next night to your heart's delight. But I am sure » you are going at present to lose your time and » labours, since there is no place to put her in an

» easy position for the enjoyment of Venus. Above » all, be indulgent on account of your wife's ten- » der age, for I am told you have a larger member » than a stallion (1). She will easily bear a bull, » be he ever so big, shortly after you, provided » you condescend to make her accustomed to » the charge by slow degrees, and not tear through » her at the first assault. Skill will be of more » service to you than violence, in planting and » grafting that branch of yours in her garden. » She said this on laughing; she then called me, and methought I heard Caviceo neigh after me. — « Daughter, thou art no longer thy own mistress, » said she, « thou art thy husband's, he begged me » to hand thee over to him for a few minutes. » Since Hymen has yielded thee up to him for thy » life-time, it is neither in thy power nor mine to » refuse. I have therefore inclined to his entreaties » which are laws for thee. Yet I wish thee to » satisfy his desire but once only : dart out as soon » as he has finished; if thou actest otherwise, thou » shalt incur my anger. » I promised I would. — « Ay, » said she, « put thyself into all the positions » he may require of thee, and take care especially

(1) *Æquo membrosiorem et equo,* which would literally mean : Better furnished than it is meet and a horse So that the Latin quibble can not be expressed in English.

» that none of the rain from the marital conduit » go to loss on thee through thy fault. Arrange » thyself so that, whatever way he goes to work, it » may fall into thy uterus. Daughter, see that thou » doest this. » Having uttered these words, she kissed me and led me to Caviceo and locked us in together. — « Caviceo » said she, « I am going to » wait in the next room until you have opened » that way in Ottavia to which Ottavia gives you » admittance. » She retired in a fit of laughing, » but came back almost as soon again : « I was for- » getting, » said she, « the most important thing to be done... » But Caviceo had already made me sit upon a bench attached to the wall. He had placed chairs under my feet spread out on purpose as well as my thighs thrown up. I was naked up to the navel, and he had unsheathed the virile weapons. When my mother saw us : — « Love is an « ingenious thing, » said she; « what a commo- » dious position this is for Venus! » Caviceo darted backwards with his threatening mentule; my mother beheld it. — « Oh, the monster! » said she, « but be courageous, daughter. It will be all- » right, if thou wilt turn thy labour to advantage. » I had got down from the bench and put myself in a decent trim. « I don't want, » said my mother, » our guests to conclude from the rumpling of thy » clothes what has been done to thee this morn-

» ing. » She took off my gown, and, leaving me only my shift to cover me, before and behind, the bottom of my body : « Now, » said she, « receive » thy husband, but remember my orders. » She kissed me again, and, opening likewise my bosom : « Why art thou hiding these sisterly breasts of » thine? are they unworthy of Caviceo's eyes and » kisses? » And turning to Caviceo : — « Look here, » Caviceo » she says, « the arena is open to you; approach, you most valiant athlete. » She then walked away. Caviceo runs joyfully and speedily, takes off my shift and draws his wanton hand to my spot; he then bids me sit as I was seated before, places the chairs under my feet, so that, my legs being raised still higher, the whole door of my garden lay wide open to the expected assaults. He nevertheless slipped his right hand under my buttocks and brought me a little closer to him. — « My darling, » said he, « thou art now indeed pre- » senting to me that which will lead me to the » term of bliss. » So, with his left hand, he bore up the heavy spear; he then stretched himself upon me.

TULLIA. Well, what part didst thou act during this time?

OTTAVIA. I neither refused nor gave. The former would be a piece of folly, the latter impudence. He applied the battering-ram to my gates; he got the

beast's head into the outer passage, by removing the lips thereof with his fingers. But he was stuck here, so he made no further attempt. — « Ottavia, » my doaty, » said he, « hug me, hoist thy right » thigh and clap it over my hips. » — « I don't un- » derstand what you are bent upon, » I answered, » what are you going to attempt? pity me! » Thereupon he ran his hand under my thigh which he cast over his hip, exactly as he wanted. He finally drives his mentule against the venereal mark. In fact he thrusted it at first with a slight shock, then with a heavier one, and at last with such violence that I did not doubt of being threatened by the most imminent danger. It was as stiff as a horn; so, whilst the extreme narrowness of the place was refusing him admittance, and whilst he was endeavouring to effect a passage to the innermost regions, he dropped his breeches down about his heels; being then naked as I was, he began to deal thick and furious blows against the counterscarp of my trench. He thrusted so forcibly, on splitting me with his wedge, that I exclaimed : « I am lacerated! » He rested a little from the work. — « Please, darling, be still, » said he, « this is how it is done : keep steady. » He put his hand again under my buttocks and drew me close to him, me who looked as if I was maintaining a running fight. He lost no time, but worried me so much by his violent

concussions that I was very near fainting. He next thrusted the sword with eager impetus, the point of which got stuck in the opening wound; I now raised such an uproar that my mother, on hearing me, came running as fast as ever she could. — « Ho there, Caviceo! » she cried, « you have then forgotten you » promised me that this sparring, which I allowed » you to indulge in, would be only an exercise, and » not a fight? » When she had said this, Caviceo melted into Venereal sweat. I felt myself drenched with the warm rain; but he, from the moment that the melting crisis came on, only acted the more hurriedly; and, like a man who greases his pike with oil, that slimy matter favoured his endeavour. So he perforated me two or three inches, pouring out such a quantity of seed that it entered into my very bowels, and then rained about my groins.

TULLIA. During this time thou wast doing

... the silly conched maid?(1)

Thou wast moved at nothing, and thou wast not likewise melted?

OTTAVIA. Dear Tullia, I confess it was only then

(1) *Fatui puella omni.*

I saw for the first time what Venus is like. Nor had I as yet thoroughly experienced all the delights of these pleasures. Just as Caviceo was on the point of wasting away, there came over me a sort of itching desire, as if I was making my water; then, drawing back my buttocks, I immediately felt, with much pleasure, something or other distilling from me, something that tickled me exceedingly in this spot. My eyes became sparkling, my breathing panting, my face flushed with fire, my whole frame dissolved. « Ah! ah! ah! Caviceo, I am going, » I exclaimed, « stop my soul which is mak- » ing away with itself, desist from this operation » which is causing death so agreeably! » — « Cou- » rage, Ottavia, » said he, « turn all thy spirits to » this enjoyment, cast from thee boldly that which » is tickling thy senses so sweetly. » In the meanwhile he lifted with his left hand the tendon, which was now in a languishing condition with its head stuck in between my thighs, and introduced it again to my gateway. Well, this contact set these parts on fire. A heavy shower of titillating liquor fell from me, and so abundantly that it would seem more like urine than an ejection of seed. Had Caviceo's weapons been ready for the fight at this nick of time, by Venus! I would, intoxicated and all as I was with joy and voluptuousness, have willingly drawn him on me. So I

began to regret that he had so speedily ended the race at the entrance to my stade, and not in the stade itself.

TULLIA. Thou art giving so glowing and so vivid a description of the thing, that thou mightest move me, even I of flint. Kiss me. Wiit thou have Lampridio? But thou dost not care for him. Thou art setting me mad; I know not what I want or what I do not want.

OTTAVIA. What has either of us to do with Lampridio? What shall I desire or not desire?

TULLIA. I am mad, my partridge, my turtledove... Ah! ah! lend me thy hand.

OTTAVIA. I give it as belonging to thyself, not as a loan. What next?

TULLIA. Put it between my thighs, and with thy open palm occupy mons Veneris; reach the seat of intestine war; thrust thy finger into it; be to me as a true husband. Dart upon me, thump me, shake me. That's all right!

OTTAVIA. Would that I could serve thee as Caviceo serves me! But what is the shadow compared to the substance? How thou art approaching thy pubis to my pubis! how thou art rubbing thy conch against mine! how thy breast sticks to my breast!

TULLIA. I am spilling, I am spilling... O Lampridio!... Ottavia!... Ah! ah!

OTTAVIA. O thou libertine! There is flowing from thy loins a stream, out of which the youngsters, Love, might scarcely escape on swimming.

TULLIA. Allow me to rest myself a little after that fit of madness, for Venus' flux is but madness. My storm has been allayed and tranquillity restored to my members. But return now to Caviceo, whom thou hast left dripping with sweat at the battle of thy citadel.

OTTAVIA. I shall. But what didst thou think of Lampridio? What didst thou say, being tormented by a violent passion? Why didst thou not rather call upon thy Callias whom thou lovest and who is mad in love with thee, to help thee in the work or at least in a part of it?

TULLIA. Thou shall know why : I shall communicate to thee most secret thoughts, amusements, delights and joys. I shall make thee a sharer of my goods, everything shall be divided between us. Remember thy dream : thou shouldst consider it as a forewarning of what the course of thy life will be in the married state.

OTTAVIA. To divide and be divided : thou toldst me that this verb has a very equivocal meaning in the commerce of Venus : and thou wishest to have everything divided between us? Venus avert the omen!

TULLIA. Thou silly creature! thou wilt divide

with me, and I with thee, we shall make a fair division; thus all our goods shall be divided between us as fairly as under the justice of Herciscunda Venus. Oh! the amusements, the merriments, the familiar lasciviousnesses! But why criticize what I say, thou jeerer? Follow out the thread of thy discourse.

OTTAVIA. Nonsense, nonsense! Now dost thou really pretend thou art serious? or that thou art a grave and upright woman? By this philosophy of thine, thou recallest me to a subject worthy of thy morals.

TULLIA. So this forms thy delight. But look here; do what thou sayest that thou art going to do without doing it.

OTTAVIA. Although Caviceo's tendon, having fallen into paralysis, was humbly suing for a truce, yet it was still threatening, being terrible on account of its mass and weight. It was frothing at the mouth, and, anointed and wet with his and my dew, it would occasionally kiss my conch. I saw that I had completely finished, the billows of my passion being calmed down. Having become therefore more free and daring : « What else dost thou require of me, Sir? » I asked. « I have obeyed, and » the idea of my endurance annoys me. Thou hast » nothing further to desire : allow me then to go. » He threw one arm round me, and with the other

hand felt my vulva polluted by his own filth as well as mine; he pointed several times with the broken spell, no longer in a state of erection. But I freed myself at length from his embraces, and, while running away. I knocked my foot against a chair, which, in falling upon the floor, made a lot of noise.

TULLIA. Thereupon thy mother appeared unawares, warned, as it were, by this trumpet sound of the end of the fight, and called to crown thee for thy victory.

OTTAVIA. Yes. « Thy mother will not complain » of our having offered libations on leaving Venus » dry, » said Caviceo. — « I know, » replied my mother, « thou art a noble sparrer : but yet I fear, » as I said before, that thou hast lost thy time » and labours for nothing. Art thou a man of good » faith? Art thou giving her back still a virgin as » she was when I entrusted her to thee? » Well, I had not noticed her coming in, nor Caviceo either, whose still naked mentule was dangling before my eyes.

TULLIA. Thy mother did not run away at the sight; for

> Even matrons come straightway,
> And willingly view a huge mentule.

OTTAVIA. In fact one would imagine, from a

surmise of womanish curiosity, that she had an inkling of our feats, or had been even an eye witness to everything it its slightest particulars.

TULLIA. We are all of us curious about those fooleries, even these who are very holy and chaste. My mother had, at the early stage of my marriage and during the honey-moon (this is how I style the day which succeeded that happy night), found nothing sweeter or more at heart than to get me to relate to her everything I had undergone; so with her arms thrown round my neck, whilst I would be speaking, she used to kiss my mouth, and those kisses were scarcely surpassed in sweetness by Lampridio's.

OTTAVIA. I shall let thee hear a similar piece of folly on the part of mine. Caviceo fled into another room (I am coming back to Caviceo), pulling up with one hand the drawers, which had fallen down about his heels; my mother shut the door on him. « And thou, daughter, » said she, « how « hast thou enjoyed it? how hast thou vied with » thy husband? » So saying, she hugged me most tightly and lavished kisses on me. — « Daughter, » lay aside all shame; fancy thou art relating to » thyself what thou art going to tell me. Thou hast » a sure friend in the person of thy mother with » respect to these rites of Hymen. Speak. »

TULLIA. And while she was chatting, her eyes

waxed like fire, her veins swelled, her conch gaped, by Venus! And, having fallen into a liquid state, she would spill of her own accord. I am not surprised at it : for she had barely atteined her twenty-ninth year. She was only thirteen when she was married; she was brought to bed of thee, dear Ottavia, going on her fourteenth year. O what a burning desire must have tormented her!

OTTAVIA. At first I made no answer; then, as she began to interrogate me more curiously : — « Mother, what dost thou want? » said I, « I have » obeyed thee and Caviceo; thee because it is my » duty; Caviceo, because thou commandedst me to » do so. » — « But, that nobody may suspect, » said she, « this folly of yours, I shall make Caviceo go » out of the house. » — « Well, bid him go down- » stairs, and not leave the place, » I replied; « this » will be far more becoming than if thou wert to » drive him away as a stranger, him who belongs » to thee because I am thy daughter, and he my » husband. » She went straight to him. — « Sit » down, » she says to me, « till I return. » So, having packed Caviceo downstairs, she came back. She then said : — « Daughter, speak candidly; » thou art now a young woman, being no longer a » child, and thou oughtest to show thyself, by thy » disposition, mistress of the house. We are both » women. This charge of spouse, to which thou

» art called, is indeed the surest source for us of » sound reason; the province of nuptial duty is as » a certain region of judgment and reason; it would » be then shameful of us to fail in it by judgment » and reason, no matter what our age be. As our » husbands, first rate artists, are infusing those joys » into our bodies, so by the same conduit, they infuse sound reason into our minds. »

TULLIA. Who would questior it? Thou art thyself a sufficient proof of it, thou, who but a few days ago could scarcely express thyself, now dost and sayest everything so well, so cleverly and so nicely.

OTTAVIA. Virginity resides with us, as it were, in the same abode as our reason, the two most precious objects of our life. The virile spear that opens our vulva also opens our reason concealed therein. Perhaps it came to reside in this place at our birth, but they dislodged it afterwards, driwing it by their violent shocks and shakes from this lower abode to higher regions.

TULLIA. Well said, ah! ah! ah! if the mentule which drove virginity out of thee drove reason into thee. Hence the name of mentule was given to that tendon, because the power of creating sound reason in us has been imparted to it by Nature.

OTTAVIA. Having grown therefore more daring under my mother's exhortation : — « Mother, » said I, « I am just the same as I was an hour ago, except

» however that Caviceo has spat over me in a » deplorable manner. » — « Thy wound » (she pointed to my vulva) « did not swallow Caviceo's wea- » pon? » — « No mother, » I replied, « it could not » get in, owing to its thickness, nor I endure the » rough attacks; I therefore shouted; I felt my- « self split open while he was thrusting so furiously » at me. » — « And withal he did not slip into thy » retrenchment on breaking through thy rampart? » she added. — « He could not, » I say, « for that » unbridled rage was speedily turned into matter. » — « Come, » said she, « show me thy shift. » — » Here it is, mother, » said I. When she saw it sprinkled all over with heavy rain, she exclaimed : — « O daughter! what is that I see! what a rich » and inexhaustible fountain of seed Caviceo pos- » sesses! Oh! how joyful and fortunate wouldst » thou have been, had this flood of seed but water- » ed the inner recesses of thy womb! There might » have been formed for us out of it an heir more » robust than Hercules. Now, » said she, « strip » naked, for I wish to remove from so fair a frame » so dirty a shift. » In short, having taken another shift, I put on my clothes, and my mother set my hair and dress in order again with such taste and care, that nothing more could be added thereto for elegance and decency sake.

TULLIA. Did she hide the shift which thou hadst

taken off? Did she devour it with her eyes?

OTTAVIA. She spread it out with scrupulous curiosity. But I was blushing at it. — « Daughter, » said she, « thou hast undergone a regular inunda- » tion, and not a sham one : but there is no sign » of the tears of wounded virginity. What made » thee shout? While virginity is being annihilated, » there distil from its carnage bloody drops, which » serve as departing tears. I understand : she has » been only stricken, but not wounded. Tonight the » business will be carried on with better success. But » I clearly see thou art quite ready for this tax on » woman's patience, which thou hast already begun » to pay. » She at last locked the shift in the clothes-press.

TULLIA. Of the wedding banquet at which I I assisted, thou hast nothing to say which I do not already know. So relate to me the games and sports of that happy night which ensued.

OTTAVIA. By Castor! there was no possibility of my getting near Caviceo until night, owing to the host of female relations and young lady friends that kept stuck round me. He once stole a kiss from troubled me, and how sweet it was, ye good Gods! Every other hope or way of arriving at complete pleasure was barred against us.

TULLIA. The nocturnal rites of love prohibit lovers from doing in the day-time what they desire.

These are night gifts which the Sun is not pleased to behold.

OTTAVIA. We began to live when the day was dying. The importunate crowd of men and women once dispersed, we were left alone, dying with the desire we had for each other. Thou wast still there with Pomponia. My mother at length took each of us by the hand and led us into the bridal chamber, and : « You have had enough of work and » torments to-day, » said she, « repair your minds » with rest and your bodies with sleep. »

TULLIA.

Go, alive, O youthful pair; sweat away all your marrow
In mutual emulation : let not doves surpass your murmurs.
The ivy your embraces, or conches your kisses!
Sport, but do not extinguish the vigilant lights :
The lamps behold everything by night, but remember nothing next day (1).

OTTAVIA. My mother had, shortly before, brought me into the room, in which my virginity had been shaken and somewhat weakened. Having now opened a gold box, a very sweet smelling odor met our nose and filled the air. « Daughter, » said she, tuck thy gown and shift up to thy navel. » I do so. On seeing me naked, she smiled : « Thou art very pretty,

(1) Fragment of an epithalamium written by the Emperor Gallenius on the occasion of his nephew's marriage.

» daughter, » she added, « and worthy of Caviceo. » But by aid of this sweet smelling ointment, thou » shalt so contrive that he may, with less exertion on » his part and little or no toil for thee, become glued » as close as possible with thee. Rub it on thy privy- » parts : there is no better way of bringing them into » action. » So I put my two fingers into the box and carried them loaded with a lot of ointment to the hillock of my vulva. — « That is not where it is » wanted, » said she, it must be placed inside, and » not daubed on the pubis and surrounding places, » as thou art doing. » She then greased the edges and the inside of the slit, by driving her fingers as far in as she could. — « I was much younger » when I got married than thou art now, » said she; « and had not my aunt made me more » proper for Venus by this ointment, than I was » by my age, I would have certainly hardly » supported thy father, whom I bore however » without great pain. » What is extraordinary, cousin, an furious itching directly set my vulva on fire, and so burning a desire of Venus seized upon me, that I could scarcely keep from going for my husband, to beg of him to come to bed with me.

TULLIA. This use is of frequent occurence in this climate, when very tender maidens are being handed over to their husband's enjoyment.

OTTAVIA. In short, thou didst put me to bed, and, according to thy own expression, thou didst bid a last farewell to my expiring virginity. When Caviceo saw himself alone, he carefully locked the room-door, as he was just going to open mine; and searched every hole and corner, for fear anybody might be concealed therein.

TULLIA. This game hates witnesses, yet it can not be played without them :

The thing shall be thus acted before mighty witnesses...

OTTAVIA. And so it really was. Caviceo had heard me, when my mother asked me whether I was greatly afraid, reply that such a fear would be injurious to my husband; and, when she added that, if I wished, she would beg Caviceo to treat me more gently, I had also answered that all suffering would be a pleasure to me, provided he found therein his enjoyment. He ran to me, and, having thrown his arms round my neck : — « What » thanks shall I return thee, my lady, » said he, « for » so great a favour? Thou wishest to be handed » over to me unconditionally, nor shall this confi- » dence remain without fruit. I bind myself to do » nothing whatsoever except what thou agreest to. » But, inasmuch as I am acquainted with thee, » thou wilt consent to my happiness. » — « To be » sure, » said I, « for how could I fight against

» thy strength and my own love? » He had already got his valets to take off his clothes, and all he kept on was a pair of linen drawers. These, too, he speedily threw off together with his shirt, and jumped naked into bed. He pressed me, also naked, most tightly in his arms, and, with a heavy shower of kisses, he exercised himself for the coming onset. He ran his lascivious hands over my breats, uterus, thighs and buttocks; inflamed and astonished, he scrutinized all my members.

TULLIA. But he had neglected the most important part of the marriage?

OTTAVIA. He came to it in the long run. At the sweet smell it was exhaling : « This most delight- » ful grot of thine, » said he « does not give out » mephitical exhalations, nor am I surprised at its » smelling well, since it contains so many good » things. Thou art wholly as the rose and the » myrtle. Well I see, » said he, « thy mother had » the intention of making the way easy for me in » this field of thy enjoyment and mine : I shall » also second the artifice by my artifice. I shall » presently split thy spot with this pike » (he pointed to his mentule, now stiff, thick and long) ; « that it may the more easily enter this conduit, I » shall, on driving it in, make it also slippery with » a pomatum I have here ready. » So he greased it, and, presenting it nicely lubricated : « Now,

» Madam, » said he, « arrange thyself properly to » meet those amorous assaults. »

TULLIA. May the goddess Virginensis, the god Subigus, the goddess Prema and the goddess Pertunda, divinities friendly to newly married couples, lend assistance!

OTTAVIA. Caviceo alone was worth the whole of them.

TULLIA. These Indigetes flocked, at Hymen's order, round the bridal bed. They, when the Paranymphs had retired, prepared by their aid the bride for a firm and unflinching endurance. Virginensis aided the bridegroom in opening the bride's girdle fastened by Hercules' knot; Subigus arrived when, the girdle being untied, the husband was mounting to fight upon the open plain of her person; Prema was keeping her from slipping away while he was pressing her down; and Pertunda acted upon her so as to allow herself to be perforated and transpierced by the javelin, and so as not to pluck it out when she should feel her tender frame split open.

OTTAVIA. Being robust and healthy, he easily overcame all my efforts; his twenty-four years made a new Hercules of him for this fight. He himself placed me to this end in the position that pleased him; with one hand he laid me, without my making any resistance, upon my back, with

the other he opned my legs. He then stooped over me, and cast himself headlong between my open thighs. So unusual a weight terrified me : « Cou- » rage, » said he, « keep steady, my darling. » — « I shall not stir. » I answered, « but pray... » A furious attack jaw-locked me : for at the same time he had applied his mentule to my vulva, into which he was driving with all his might. The gaping vulva had spontaneously swallowed the crown of the head; he then rushed down with his whole weight, and fell to breaking through the network which was barring the entrance.

TULLIA. That is to say :

It stimulates courage to be the first capable
Of breaking through the narrow barriers of Nature's gates.

OTTAVIA. My unfortunate vulva was torn wretchedly; it begged, on expressing its pain, my hand to be brought to its aid; so it was sent to it out of my impatience. I could retain my voice no longer, and tried to pluck out of my womb the spear already stuck in my guts. But Caviceo kissed me : — « My soul, » said he, « I shall not allow » myself to be softened; take away that trouble- » some hand of thine; there still remains to thee » and me little or no labour to finish the job. » In the meanwhile, I put a stop to his impetuosity, and, on placing my hand crosswise, I kept the

mentule from sinking any deeper. But thereupon : « Ah! ah! my honey! » he cried; « press for me » this tendon which thou art holding; squeeze » it with thy fingers, as if it was in a vice. » I squeeze it violently and in the same moment a scalding shower shot into my garden, for nearly half the mentule was inside of me. He no longer shook me, as a little while before : he abstained from all movement and poured out his seed into my plain, so that not a single drop, or globule strayed from the straight direction of the high-way. The lascivious tail began by this time to languish in my hand and in my vulva. Being wet, frothy, apathetic, it ran away.

TULLIA. Were the candles still lighting in your room?

OTTAVIA. Every thing shone as bright as in broad day-light. « I have done, my goddess, » said Caviceo. « With what an overflowing measure » of pleasure hast thou blessed me! But let us now » rest ourselves a little, each in each other's arms. »

TULLIA. And thou, cousin, thou hadst had no sensation of pleasure?

OTTAVIA. Hearken to this silly story. When over me. I began to hug him, to entice him by my looks, to excite him by my sighs; he too commenced to smack me sweetly, to toy with my nether mouth, to play his fingers in the moss and between

the lips. I suddenly feel a very delicious flood issuing from my veins, rushing in an impetuous course out of the cisterns of the womb, augmented by that humour with which he had drenched me.

TULLIA. Thus certain great rivers are, we are told, borne along with incredible rapidity from their sources or foutainheads.

OTTAVIA. Well, Caviceo received those rivers in the hollow of his left hand, and at so unexpected an effect : — « My soul, I had arrived sooner than » thou at the term of pleasure. » I began to shake for shame like a criminal; but he had removed his hand from this place which the overflowing foam of Venus had polluted. « I did not think, » said he, « that thou wouldst be so ripe for Venus at » this age. Other little girls do not even feel the » slightest sting of enjoyment during these first » assaults; thou art swimming up to thy navel in » pleasure. Good, my pleasure, good I say. » So saying, he carries his hand again to it : « Bless » me! » he cried, « this is no mere Venereal flood, » but a regular deluge. What vases hast thou » concealed in thy womb, capable of containing » such an abundant stock of rain? » — « This matter » comes from thee and not from me, » I answered. « What thou didst pour in is now poured out : how » could I prevent its running from my vase which » is now so horribly broken? » — « Be that as it may,

» my soul, » he replied, « I am exceedingly glad » that thou art filled to overflowing with these » joys. Speak frankly. » — « That is true, » said I, « thou hast largely compensated me with these » joys for all the suffering thou didst cause me, on » driving so hard into me. Even this morning I » felt a slight shadow of incredible pleasure, al- » though the morning Venus is nothing compared » to the nightly Venus. » In the meantime, I had wiped with the sheet as well as I could that slime off my person, because my mother had forgotten to put a towel under the pillow. — « Look » here, » said Caviceo, « cheer up. I want to make » thee pass through all the stages of pleasure, and » to find to thy liking everything that affords me » that pleasure. » I say it is the part of a brazen-faced woman to excite herself and shake her buttocks under her husband. — « I don't want thee, » he says, « to put thy buttocks into motion, nor to » reply to my movements; nay more, I don't » want thee to toss up thy legs either both together » or one ofter the other, whenever I am mounting » upon thee. Here is what I want : first, open and » spread out thy thighs as far apart as thou » canst. Present thy vulva to the mentule that » it may be pierced, and keep quietly in » this position until I have got to the end of » my enjoyment. There are also other little

» things of which I shall inform thee next night. »

TULLIA. Every wife has a law-giver in her husband : every husband has his manners and desires. The more diligently the wife conforms herself to her husband's manners, so much the more enviable will be the life she enjoys. In fine, the honest woman's is she who seeks her own pleasure in that of her husband.

OTTAVIA. « My tendon is swelling, » said he. He kissed me as I was lying on my side, pressed my breasts softly, handled my still wet conch, then drew my left hand to his mentule. He asked me to take it; so I took it. He then bids me prepare myself for the onset; I obey. He mounts nimbly upon me; he applies the mentule to the gate : thereupon, the stiff-necked guest entered into this cavern of mine; but, having got half-way in, namely, about five inches, he paused. « Now, » said he, « I want thee, darling, to count all my bounces. » Take care not to make any mistake in thy count» ing. » — « I shall take care, » said I, « and I shall » be complaisant. » He then drove his mentule farther in : and while my thoughts are busy in counting, he impetuously broke my door open and plunged the furious mentule up to the dangling-bobs into the sanctuary of Venus. A very smart pain forced me to shout, causing me in this troubled state of mind to forget the injunction

enjoined upon me. « Thou art killing me, Caviceo, » thou art killing me! » I exclaimed; « spare wre- » tched me. » — « Thou hast already passed through » the worst part of it, » said he, « behold, my joy, » thou hast taken the whole of me in, however » long and thick I am. » — « Desist a while, » said I, « hold off, do withdraw a little of thy gory sword. » — « On the contrary, » said he, « I shall bury it » still farther in, if possible; » and he had no sooner said this, than he began again to push most furiously. He placed his pubis so close to mine, that he seemed as if he would make his whole being penetrate into my body. I then raise my voice : « Dost thou not feel, » said I, « that thou art strik- » ing against the very bottom of my uterus? » Thou art killing me, hold off; ah! do not plunge » the whole of thy sword into my body! » He drew back, as I begged him; and, on pulling the dagger half way out of the wound : — « What, dear wife! » said he, « have I touched the bottom of thy abyss » with my anchor? » He soon began anew to make it enter gradually and insensibly. — « Be » on thy guard, » he says; « be not afraid to speak » as soon as thou feelest thyself knocked within; » I shall thereupon retire. Although I delight in » the enjoyment of thy charms, yet I am not so » infatuated as to fain turn my pleasure into » cruelty. » So saying, he worked his mentule

farther in, and, as that was hurting me : — « Stop, » said I; « thou art causing with thy sword, thus » stuck in me, a dear though very cruel wound. » He again withdrew. « All sense of pain, » I added, « goes from my womb simultaneously with thy » weapon; pray, do not sink it deeper. » Yet only about four inches of the virile staff remained outside of my pubis and vulva. — « I know now, » said he, « how much of my mentule thou canst » receive without pain. Provided three inches » remain outside, my assault can do thee no harm. » Give me, therefore, thy hand; let it be for each » of us a sort of enlargment to thy conch. For » thou art aware that the entire body of a pretty » girl, like thee, forms but one conch. » I do as he desired me : I slip my hand to that spot; and seizing the mentule tightly between my fingers, I squeeze it. He then engaged fresh battle, and at the tenth sally melted away; I felt a slight titillation whilst he was pouring his rivers of seed into my pond. But nothing more : for I ejected nothing from me.

TULLIA. Really, thou art charming my ears with so witty and so spirited a narration. But how many shocks didst thou count in this second coition? how many didst thou bear?

OTTAVIA. Well, a score before I was disturbed in my reckoning; and ten afterwards, as thou hast

just heard. But whilst I was shouting, whilst I was being excruciated, whilst I was complaining of being slain, he gave me several far more vehement ones. Judge of their number thyself.

TULLIA. Good. How didst thou enjoy the remainder of the night?

OTTAVIA. Stretched out to his full length, he lay upon me with his breast glued to mine He was enchanted to feel his mentule still sucked; bound as they say, with the snow white chains of my arms, he was lavishing his kisses upon me, when we heard the little door next to our bed open; at the same moment, my mother appeared at the head of the bed. Thou hadst gone away, cousin. — « Hem! » said she, « I thought you were dead in » the midst of your hugging. » Caviceo placed himself at my side, whilst I, having grown red in the face, said : — « Forgive me, mother. Ah me! to » what a cruel and turbulent husband hast thou » given me! » — « Courage, daughter, » she replied; » whatever thou mayest have endured is but a » part of thy duty and moral obligation. The sweet » enjoyments of the marriage state are made ac- » cessible to thee by means of this slight suffer- » ing. » Then turning to Caviceo : — « Well, son, » have you a virgin or a full blown wife? » — « I » am your son-in-law, » he answered, « and indeed » I have a wife; » thereupon he kissed me. —

« That's right, » she says, on likewise taking a kiss from Caviceo. « I now recognize, » she says, « as one » of my own him who has played so manly with my » virginal daughter. » She then ran and brought us some drink to refresh us; having extinguished the candles which were still burning near the alcove, she retired at once. She had no sooner gone, than Caviceo threw his arms round me again; and, after hawing entertained me for some time with what he desired I should avoid or practise, we both fell fast asleep. In the first place, he told me that he heartily detested those mad movements of the female body in Venus' palestra. He made several other observations which, I think, have no connection with this recital. The day was already shining when, being awake, I began to gaze curiously at the body of Caviceo still asleep. I confess, cousin, that Nature, the mother of all things, formed nothing better proportioned or more fair among men. He was lying upon his back : a full white breast; long round arms; a slightly prominent belly; fat, robust thighs; calves which were neither too slender nor too clumsy; a healthy, unwrinkled, spotless white skin. Thou wouldst have fancied him a marble statue.

TULLIA. And did Caviceo's middle tendon escape that prying curiosity of thine?

OTTAVIA. It was formidable even at rest, and

menacing in the midst of peace, although like one thunder-stricken, I thought, as I was viewing it, that my eyes imparted fresh courage to it and revived it. It began to stir and lift its head, as if it were conscious of being before its mistress's gaze; it broke Caviceo's sleep. I pretended I was fast asleep; Caviceo on turning to me : — « Art thou » asleep, my darling » he inquired. — « Why » dost thou disturb, » said I, « my peaceful slumb- » ers? » — « I thought, » said he, « that when I saw » the day-light thou wast already awake, thou » who art my sun. » He kisses me, handles my breasts, my uterus, and seizes the chosen part of my uterus, the beloved conch. He gets upon me, carries the stiff pike to my slit. — « I shall be mind- » ful of my promise, » said he, « do not stir. Should » I drive it in farther than thou canst bear it, let » me know. » He then drove the mentule into the furrow, as far as that spot where he knew the limit between my pain and pleasure lay. So, in this night's last toil, he was treading me for a long while when, excited unto voluptuousness by his repeated shocks, eaten by a scalding itch, I could not help lifting my buttocks a little bit. Then, with all his might, he sunk the dagger up to the hilt, without causing me so much suffering as before. I nevertheless heaved a sigh; and, the melting crisis having seized upon him, he bathed the wound he

had made with plenty of balsam. He declared that this pleasure surpassed any he had with me until then. So that is how we spent the night. And after a short chat, a very gentle sleep came over us, nor did we wake till late in the day. What would be the use of mentioning what remains, since thou knowest, and art acquainted with, it, having taken a principal part in it thyself?

TULLIA. Indeed, thou hast a very lazy courser, since he arrived only at the third mile during a whole night. But nearly all those, from whose groins Nature has suspended a weight beyond that possessed by the ordinary standard of men, are faint and sluggish. Marriage is, nevertheless, the supreme good for our sex; every love which the law of Hymen does not sanctify is baneful and degrading. Yet no existence is happy outside of love. But we married women are all the authors of our own happiness.

OTTAVIA. I am surprised, since Venus is so sweet a thing, that men are not continually burning with its fire. As for us, we are far more inclined than they to enjoy those delights of life.

TULLIA. Of course thy own sensual ardour and Caviceo's natural coldness are detrimental to thee. Thou lovest to hear Catullus' sparrow chirp in thy nest. No wonder that thou, the issue of thy mother's

blood, shouldst be enkindled by the maternal passions.

OTTAVIA. I have never heard anything said about her, calculated to blacken her reputation.

TULLIA. Being a few years older, she so corrupted Lucrezia, Vittoria and me with her lubricities, that there were no greater wantons than we. We were all from nine to ten years old. But thy mother, Sempronia, was going on her twelfth year. She pretended to Vittoria, with whom she was mad in love at so tender an age, that she and I were boys; she used to address Lucrezia and Vittoria, as a lover his mistress, using amourous expressions and exciting them unto love. And complaining of being on fire, she used to beg us to allay the flames with kisses and hugs. As for us, who felt no amorous sensation, we used to laugh, but we kissed and embraced her. Then, splipping her hand under our petticoats, she would run it with lascivious touch over our chastity. She would occasionally desire us to lie upon our backs, tuck up our clothes, our shifts, and devour with her eyes our naked persons. She would order us to spread out our legs. She too would strip herself naked; she would next jump upon us, riding us as a man would do. Born of such a mother, thou must be as ardent as Venus. Eh! eh! eh! I have a good memory, listen.

OTTAVIA. I shall believe what thou art stating,

provided thou informest me how it is, that a woman so prone to libertinism, has nevertheless conserved herself most pure from all dishonour.

TULLIA. I shall do so. But listen to what excesses that childish folly went. We chanced to go and see her one afternoon, three or four months before she was wedded to thy father. Her father and mother were absent, and, out of all the servants, only her nurse was left to watch her : but she was occupied in another part of the house. There was at Sempronia's feet a charming and merry Cupid, a lad of about fourteen. She allowed the little boy to join in our childish fun, and, after much running, jumping and all kind of amusement, she began to attack Giocondo (this was the lad's name) with taunts and slurs. — « O thou little girl! » she cried, « we are boys, but thou art a lass. See, friends, » how modest she looks. I am blowed! but she is a » maiden and not a man. Her boy's attire conceals » a virgin. Undoubtedly, she despises the sex and » their dress. » He, like all boys, blushed at first and then friend to run away. So we all set out after the fugitive. When we had dragged him back into the alcove : « Let us now see to which sex he « belongs », said Sempronia. She was the first to put her hand between his thighs.

OTTAVIA. Nor did Giocondo offer any resistance? Ah! ah! ah!

TULLIA. « Begone, » said he, « of course I am » no maiden, and I shall shortly know whether you » yourselves are girls. » Sempronia's lascivious hand lit upon the tendon, which she took out of prison. As soon as she felt it swelling out in her hand : — « Hem! what is that? » she said on turning to me. « Touch it thou also, Tullia. » Vittoria and I stretched out our hands, still raw at these wanton tricks. We felt it swelling more and more under the influence of this contact of ours; Sempronia also repeated her caresses. — « When I » handled it first, » said she, « it was flesh, it has » now become ivory. Tell me, Giocondo, dost thou » know the use of this apparatus? » — « I have never » tried it, » he answered, « I am too young; but » I know its use withal. » — « Let us hear it then, » replied Vittoria. — « To be sure, » said he, « I shall » teach all of you, but one by one, even here » (he pointed to the head of the alcove). « Now I » wish to teach Sempronia the first. » He therefore took her by the hand and led her to that home of voluptuousness. The floor was spread with Turkish carpets : a pair of cushions lay on the ground. « Now sit down, Miss, » said he; « I shall soon show » you the use of your own spot and this member » (he held out the mentule), « and you will acknow- » ledge that nothing sweeter exists. » She laid herself down of her own free will upon one of the

cushions; then Giocondo unbuttoned his breeches and, having drawn his weapons, he went on his knees between Sempronia's thighs.

OTTAVIA. Thou sawst?

TULLIA. I saw all as thou seest me. « I wish, » Miss, » said he, « to stick this javelin into thy » uterus. » So saying, with one hand he tossed her over on the other cushion which he had placed there to prop up her head; with the other, he tucked up Sempronia's petticoats and shift as far as ever he could, doubling them over her girdle. He then stretched himself upon her, and with a drive or two sent the javelin into her cleft. Methought Sempronia shuddered. — « Eh! eh! » she cried, « it » is hurting me, Giocondo, but it is hurting me » agreeably. » — « Shall I withdraw? » he asked. — « No, » she replied, Giocondo began to excite himself and at every shock she would repeat : — « Eh! » eh! » until each was as it were in ecstasy from this new titillation. — « Ah! ah! » exclaimed Giocondo, « hug me, Miss; I am making my wather. » — « And I too, » replied Sempronia; « eh! eh! push, » push hard, I am fainting. » They increased their rather frequent shocks, by the mutual motion of their to and fro bounces. — « How cleverly you » toss up your buttocks! » said Giocondo; « how » skilfully you put them in motion! » — « As for thee, » said she, « I feel that thou hast really pissed

» inside of me. O the thing! the thing!... » she fainted at this and shortly after added : « delightful! » So both finished the busines. When Sempronia had risen, she ran to my arms. « O the marvellous » sport! » she cried. « To the Dickens with our » silly childish pastime! Only Giocondo knows » how to play at an interesting and select game. » Giocondo gave her a kiss as she was speaking; he also kissed Vittoria and me, who were awaiting similar delights from him. — « But I feel all wet » under my shift, as if thou hadst rained a heavy » shower over me, » said Sempronia. Thereupon Giocondo put his hand under her petitcoats. — « Take care, Miss, » said he, « thy shift be not stain- » ed by that matter, » and he wiped it carefully. « Now, if the nurse or thy mother sees this Vene- » real flood on thy shift, she will conclude that » thou hast been violated. » — « And she will con- » clude rightly, » said Sempronia. — « Hem! » what do I hear? what have you done? » inquir- ed Vittoria. « I have seen nothing at all, nor have I » been so prying as thou, Tullia. » — « We have » done, » replied Giocondo, « what your parents » are in the habit of doing; what the husbands, » into whose arms you will one day go, will do : » in short, what I shall presently do to you. Now, » I want the youngest of you, whilst my undimi- » nished force is still disposed to break through Venus'

» citadel. There is less difficulty in a girl of riper » age, nor is the work to stubborn. »

OTTAVIA. I am no longer myself; thou hast thrown me into a state of stupor which I am unable to describe in words. O mother! O how I shall remember thee, my mother!

TULLIA. « Giocondo, » I replied, « Vittoria is » younger and weaker than I; but she surpasses » me by a great deal in wit and beauty. » — « You » both are handsome and remarkable on account » of your shape, » replied Giocondo; « I shall » accommodate each of you with my goods. But » yet neither of your paps are developed : they » already adorn Sempronia's snow-white breast, » without, however, encumbering it. » He had put his hand into Vittoria's breast, then into mine, and encountered not regular globes of breasts, but the budding traces of breasts. — « Indeed, if thou » dost not find those globes on the surface of the » body, thou wilt at least find in the middle of it » the milky way which will lead thee straight to » heaven, » said Sempronia, the witty and jocose girl. Giocondo, on turning to her, said : — « Let » me kiss, Miss, those pretty paps of thine, which » have conferred immortality on me. » After having loaded them with countless smacks, he showed Vittoria and me how plump, hard and white they were; then, stretching her upon her back in

bed, he handled the uterus and shrine of Venus. He requested us likevise to inspect her with our eyes and fingers; he next knocked me over on the cushion and glutted his passion at the sight of my naked person. — « Approach, Vittoria, » said he, « allow me to feast on thy charms. » Sempronia dragged her to him against her will. He slipped his hand under her shift, laid hold of her chastity, separated its lips and thrusted his finger into it. That part of me was not yet veiled with down. — « Look here, » said Sempronia, « take a leisure- » ly view of my friend Tullia's charms; » at the same time, she pulled up my petticoat and shift as high as she could. « But, since thou art on thy knees in » a supplicant's posture, bestow a kiss upon so » many wonders, » she added. He therefore favoured my uterus with a smack and, why not tell the truth? even the very conch of voluptuousness. Meanwhile, under the influence of so many provocations, he began to erect; so, bending over the naked Vittoria, he impetuously drove the stiff javelin into the gaping passage. Vittoria raised her voice : — « Begone, begone, » she shouted, « I » am unable to bear it; » but, at the end of the fifth or sixth shock, she swallowed the entire weapon, and, by a complete coition, she was initiated in the art of Venus.

OTTAVIA. Didst thou not retire with my

mother, whilst Vittoria was being deflowered?

TULLIA. When we saw that Giocondo had penetrated with so slight an effort into the innermost regions, we applauded him as he gained the winning-post on swift steeds, and carried off the prize from Vittoria. He poured the marital dew into the furrow of the little girl, who was, however, dead to every sense of the achieved pleasure. The act over, he wiped Vittoria's field with a towel; she, on rising to her feet, cried : — « There is runn- » ing from my slit some matter or other, which » I felt flowing out of thy body into mine. » While she was speaking, Giocondo lifted her shift and, applying the towel softly, he wiped her again; we beheld a whitish liquor mixed with blood. Then, throwing his arms round her, he pressed her to his breast. He consoled her as she was complaining of having been cruelly treated. He next folded up the towel stained with blood and Venereal sweat. — « Even the Jew Apella, » said he, « would con- » fess thou wast a virgin. » — « And was I not one, » retorted Sempronia, « you over wicked, naughty » slave, abounding in all the vices of servitude? » — « Yes, miss, you were one too, » replied Giocondo; « but, owing to your age, you were somewhat wider » than Vittoria, and that is why you did not deco- rate my triumph with such distinct marks of an » immolated virginity. For those who have the

» happiness to obtain these marks esteem them as » spolia opima; and the longer and more painfully » they panted to have them, so much the more » contented do they feel. Pain heightens the relish » of pleasure. »

OTTAVIA. I pity thee, who, amidst those delights, with which my mother and Vittoria were satiated, didst remain so long fasting.

TULLIA. The delicate and tender lad, being overwhelmed with lassitude as well as pleasure, was wasted away. So I said to him : — « Giocondo, » thou art now languishing and spent, art thou » not? Wilt thou heve force enough to satisfy my » embraces? Shall I go away a widow from this » wedding? » Sempronia laughed. — « Indeed » thou wilt not, » she replied; « I am guarantee » for thee, Giocondo; but thou must have some » refreshment to repair thy strength, thou who » hast spent thy wealth so munificently upon us. » Go therefore to the nurse and bid her fetch » me and my friends luncheon. » The lad obeyed, and shortly after returned with a big plum-cake and a bottle of excellent wine. I gave him the first a respectable slice of the cake : he did not simply eat it, but literally devoured it; I then gave him a glass of wine to drink. — Giocondo is eating and » drinking for thee, » said Sempronia. « Attend » to the person of him who is going to pour the

» unknown delights into thy body. » Sempronia and Vittoria were equally attentive to Giocondo. Being therefore refreshed by the drink and food, he stated that he had quite recovered the force he had left behind him in their vulva. He dashed at once to my arms and lips : he laid me flat upon the cushions, in spite of my sham resistance, while Sempronia stood laughing. In a word, he filled his belly on the supreme pleasure, between my thighs.

OTTAVIA. He therefore found an easy entrance into thee.

TULLIA. Art thou not aware that we, Italians, are nearly all of us very wide during our early years?

OTTAVIA. I hope thou wilt make an exception in our own behalf.

TULLIA. Nonsense! We were both wedded to huge mentules. Had the Lampsacean soil produced two such heroes as Callias and Caviceo, once Priapus had been carried off to the Gods, the young women with itching desires would not have regretted the defunct Priapus, whose principal motto was as follows :

> Our mentule has this one great advantage :
> That no woman can be too wide for me.

We have appeared narrow to those men who can find no wider woman Now, when Sempronia and

Vittoria were handed over to their husbands, although the latter were well furnished and far older than Giocondo, they received the weapon into their bowels at the first assault, and tasted all the joys of a complete coition. That is true, cousin; Italian and Spanish women have Venus' front-door ajar, gaping hideously : one would imagine they were formed not only for men, but also for mules. Aye, Giocondo had already partly opened in us a path of pleasures for our husbands.

OTTAVIA. I thought so : you had prepared the way, lest it might be too difficult for those who were to enter upon it.

TULLIA. Thou art mistaken. The lad's mentule, at his age, was no longer than my forefinger, and no thicker than my thumb. In fact, we are all married to remarkably well supplied husbands; yet we must confess that those of Vittoria and Sempronia, be they ever so richly furnished, can not be compared with Callias or Caviceo. Doctors pretend that those whose mentules surpass seven or eight inches, in a state of erection, exceed the ordinary bounds of nature : it is the usual measure, whenever there is question of length; but the thickness ought to correspond to the size. They say that the capacity and depth of the vagina up to the opening of the matrix may be widened out to seven or eight inches, in the act of coition; they

further state that this can not be done without a certain amount of damage and suffering for the woman. In case the tendon swells to an immoderate size, coition then becomes difficult. When the vagina is dilated even to tearing, the cruel mentule brings more hostility to bear upon the female arcana than the love it promised. But, of course, the younger we are, the better qualified we are to receive men's tools, whatever be their size.

OTTAVIA. I was under the impression that no woman, wherever she lived, ever led a more exemplary life than my mother. Now, cousin, how, on earth, is it that neither my father, who is a very suspicious man, nor rumor, which is always on the watch, throughout towns, for even the most secret things, and divulging them as if it had seen them; how is it, I say, that neither of them observed anything in her but what was right and praiseworthy? Indeed my father loves her extremely and every one lavishes the highest praises on her, as being an exceedingly chaste and upright woman.

TULLIA. Nearly all those women, that lose their life or suffer the loss of their reputation, which is more precious than life, fall into this disgrace through their own fault. It is a true maxim which says :

Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines.

Honour or dishonour does not consist in the things themselves, but in the use we make of them. A sly cunning person is looked upon as prudent, and it is the part of a prudent person to keep, as it were, within certain bounds. Therefore no love passion, no fit of envy, which very often blinds us, should ever cause a wary and reasonable woman's mind to overstep these bounds. Ottavia, dost thou wish to live well and happy? imagine that everything is permitted, and prohibited, to thee at the same time. Let such be thy great maxim in that state of life, which the law of marriage has assigned thee.

OTTAVIA. I scarcely comprehend, if I comprehend at all, what thou meanest. How am I to suppose that everything is permitted, and prohibited, to me at the same time?

TULLIA. Whatever thou canst conveniently do, without any scandal to thy husband or family, be fully persuaded that it is permitted to thee; but what thou canst not safely do, doubt not of its being entirely prohibited. For the present, I must instruct thee in the principles of true practical wisdom; after these, thou wilt regulate the course of thy entire future life. I am indebted to them for all my pleasures and for the perfect conservation of my good reputation, whilst enjoying myself and freely indulging in the gifts of youth. Thou too

wilt owe them thy happiness. We are all, good and bad alike, lured unto pleasure by the same sentiment, borne on by the same movement. But the bad never cast a thought on honour, whereas the good prefer public esteem and honour to pleasure, and even to life itself. The good, however, do not all take the same road to arrive at their pleasures. Either a shameful death or the pitchy darkness of vice stops nearly all the imprudent and unwise ones in the very midst of their career. On the other hand, honour and the repeated applause of the delighted multitude accompany those who try and let themselves be guided by the precepts of wisdom, even to ill famed places and brothels. Therefore the end must not be changed, such a thing would only deviate one from the right road, but simply the method of arriving at the end.

OTTAVIA. What is this end? what method is to be employed to find it? I should be very glad indeed to learn so agreeable and so useful at thing.

TULLIA. I am going to explain it in a few words. A month had scarcely passed since my marriage with Callias, when, after a close study of Callias' manners as well as of my own, I had already made myself certain rules, which I have carefully observed until now. The advantages I have been reaping from them, thou, too, wilt reap, if thou observest them. In the first place, I thought over what was

above me, outside of me and within me. Above me is religion, which, while occupying the first rank in politics, has no place in the order of nature. I considered what I owed to the religion in which I was born, to the ashes of the dead and to myself. First, it is meet that married women should be pious or appear to be so. Now, the one that is truly pious and makes no show of her devotion does not carry the day over her, who at least offers the appearance of piety without having any. A wife's supreme happiness depends on the judgment her husband has formed of her. She who is made much of by her husband, although destitute of value, is happy and fortunate; whereas, she who is hated and despised by her husband, be she ever so handsome and virtuous, has a very sad life indeed. Once those over-violent love fits have cooled down in our embraces, our husbands then measure the opinion they are to form of us by the number of virtues that shine in us. They deem those, whom they do not believe virtuous, unworthy of their love. They love us, previous to having enjoyed our charms, because we are pretty, comely and young. But when they have at length satisfied their desires with viewing, handling and the free use of our persons, they love us inasmuch as they esteem us, inasmuch as they believe we are good, inasmuch has they behold us adorned with

virtues. Therefore, Ottavia, comply with these habits, or else counterfeit them. No forgetfulness will ever erase, no act will ever efface, the opinion which Caviceo has formed of thee, these first days of thy marriage. Thou must always sustain the character thou hast assumed on this new stage of existence.

OTTAVIA. Shall I go masked? Yet this mask of one's behaviour is more easily taken off than put on.

TULLIA. The second chapter of conjugal prudence may be set forth in the following terms : Consider it as criminal to show little or no respect for public rites and common customs. Live, in presence of all people, secretely and safely for thyself. Draw a veil of holiness over thy life. He that gives his evil actions an appearance of probity is far more useful to civil life, than he whose good actions are blackened by disgrace. Assume a certain modesty which thou canst easily cast aside, whenever that becomes necessary. Let those who see thee devoted heart and soul to thy duties swear there is nothing purer than thy morals. Let those whom thou wouldst make happy understand that there is nothing more agreeable than thy embraces, more pleasing than thy manners, more free than thy converse. Imitate thy mother Sempronia.

OTTAVIA. What thou art teaching is clear; but

what thou statest about my mother is doubtful and obscure.

TULLIA. I am just as well acquainted with her as with thee. I underwent her lascivious fits, as thou mine. Know that I have deduced these chapters of the conjugal institution from her morals and counsels. « Of all men, let thy husband hold, in » thy eyes, the place of a god, » she used to say to me, when I was married. « Every woman with » a judicious mind should hold for certain that she » was born for her husband's pleasures, and that » all other men were born for hers. The former » thou owest to thy husband, the latter, to thyself. » Comply with whatever thy husband should re- » quire of thy bridal duty. Let nothing, that seems » to please him, shock thee. Change thyself into all » sorts of shapes and forms, as Proteus, if he com- » mands it. Whenever he takes the notion of amus- » ing himself more freely with thee, let every- » thing he brings into play seem honest to thee. Serve » his pleasures willingly and with a light heart, that others may serve thine. » That is how I act with Callias, that is how I act with Lampridio.

OTTAVIA. Well, I now understand the sort of intercourse thou hast with Lampridio.

TULLIA. It is well thou shouldst also know the hidden sweetness of my love. I cheerfully offer Callias the use of my person, such as he will have

it, without my receiving any pleasure from him : but I receive from Lampridio what is most agreeable and delightful. The one commands me, I command the other; I belong to the former, the latter belongs to me; the one enjoys the use of my person, I that of the other. Thus gold does not differ more widely from lead than a mistress differs from a wife. The distance between earth and sky is smaller than the happiness of a free concubine compared with the condition of a married woman. In a word, thou wilt be happy and blessed, if thou knowest how to blend the one with the other.

OTTAVIA. Would I be mad enough to desire a lover? Would I receive him into my arms, introduce him into my bed? Venus preserve me from such impudence! Besides, would I have nothing to fear from my husband's just wrath, if I were unfortunate enough to commit such an outrage? I know his character perfectly : in case he suspected me of a like forfeit, neither Gods nor men would drag me alive out of his hands.

TULLIA. I do not want to thwart thy chastity; I shall grant thee my Hercules' kisses, desires and groins. I shall throw thee into his arms; I shall, moreover, put him upon thy charger, with my own hands.

OTTAVIA. How funny thou art! ah! ah! ah! He will have sufficient loins, eh?

TULLIA. O wench, O thou strumpet ever since thou leftst the cell! My rival will find a rival for thee, if thy Venus be too powerful for him.

OTTAVIA. I said in jest what thou takest seriously. But tell me, my dear mediatrix: how on earth didst thou procure so faithful and so precious a host? Didst thou of thy own free will put thyself within his reach and power? By what spells didst thou blind thy husband, Callias? What wiles of thine gratify thee, impregnated with such voluptuousness, preserving thee safe and sound from so many dangers which, on all sides, beset our caprices?

TULLIA. Why not tell thee? O thou pure and downright courtesan! What I am going to relate will astonish thee. Thy mother, Sempronia, a few days after her marriage, was to be led in great pomp to Vittorio's place. What she especially entreated of her mother was, that Giocondo should be given to her, to serve her as footman, or rather as mentule-man. As to Vittorio, he did not require much pressing.

OTTAVIA. About six months later on, Giocondo got married; but he did not leave our service on that account. And now, when I curiously look back at all I saw or heard during that time they were together and disregardful of my tender age, I am, after all these things, of thy opinion. That is how

it is, Tullia : Giocondo enjoyed my mother's goods.

TULLIA. Speak; what dost thou fear?

OTTAVIA. How completely she abused the opinion people had conceived of her! Deceitful appearance of virtue! I often saw them chatting and flirting together, whenever my father was away from home. Giocondo used to tickle my mother : he was no longer a footman, but a general manager. Withal, he did not attack her breasts, as far as I could see, or that famous part of our person. He once chanced to enter the bed-room, in which my mother and I were together. My mother was doing some rich tapestry work; I, like all other children, was playing with a little bitch which I was holding up by the ear. So, with a cheerful countenance, he accosted my mother, stretched her his hand to rise from her seat and led her away whether she would or not out of my sight. I thought they had left the room and I was very glad to find myself alone; but all on a sudden I heard the bed straining and my mother's voice, as if she were undergoing some cruel suffering. Stricken with fear, I prick up my ears, and, springing at once to my feet, I fly to her. My mother heard me, and, before I could get nearer to her, she ran to meet me, took me into her arms, smiled on kissing me : but Giocondo had fainted away. « Mother, what ailed thee, when I heard thee » heaving sighs? » I asked. — « Nothing at all, » she

replied; « as I was coming into the room, I knocked » against the foot of the bed and almost dislocat- » ed my heel. »

TULLIA. Yes. But thou sawst nothing else? Thou hadst no inkling of their familiarity?

OTTAVIA. Of course I had; but what one makes only a conjecture of can not be looked upon as a proof. Each of them took such good care to flee my sight, that I never could acquire any certainty. One thing I clearly understood : my mother spared no pains to give me a high opinion of herself, and to persuade me that she was the most exemplary woman in our town.

TULLIA. I know it; she earnestly entreated me on several occasions to recommend her to thee as a very chaste and holy woman. Well, what I am now disclosing to thee about her secrets shall, nevertheless, lie buried, for everyboby else, in dark oblivion.

OTTAVIA. I would be a parricide if I did not spare the reputation of my mother, who always cherished me so tenderly, that reputation which outweighs even life itself. But see what a cunning trick she wanted to play on me. About three days before I was to be given to Caviceo, she addressed me as follows : « Daughter, the day after to-mor- » row, thou wilt be wedded to Caviceo; only this » short space separates thee from contaminations

» and filth; until now thou wast holy and pure, » being a virgin. When thou wilt have lost thy » maidenhead, many virtues will flee thee, so stain- » ed with corruption; nor canst thou by any » means, whether violent or dexterous, conserve » those which a severe gravity suits. Nothing is » more heavenly than a virginal maid, and noth- » ing is more despicable than a polluted girl. » — « Mother, what shall I do? » I answered, « let me » then conserve my virginity intact the remainder » of my life. Cloister me among the Vestals. » — « God forbid! » she replied; « neither our fortune, » nor the love I bear thee would ever suffer me to » bury thee alive. Make a vow to hate and abhor » every idea and desire of lust. Remove thy mind, » as I have always removed mine, from those con- » taminations, and, on venerating with a sacrifice » the chastity thou art just going to lose, weep » over it when lost with another sacrifice. » — « I » will, » said I, « but to what sacrifice are you » exhorting me, mother? » — « I wish and beseech » thee, Ottavia, » said she, on kissing me, « I wish » thee to decide by thyself on this sacrifice, and » each of us to have a hand in its consummation. » But thou must have an unflinching and resolute » courage. » — « I shall not be wanting in courage, » I answered. Then she made me take an oath and promise her that I would endure whatever she

would counsel. — « To morrow morning, » she added, « since thou art as pure, good and chaste, » daughter, as thou art pretty, witty and handsome, » when in the temple thou shalt have promised the » Gods what thou hast promised me, we shall execute » a glorious, righteous and an exceedingly useful » thing for thee. »

TULLIA. Thou tellest me nothing new; she informed me of the whole affair, such as it took place, on laughing at thy credulity, but on highly praising thy courage.

OTTAVIA. I therefore give over my recital; what thou already knowest, thou canst not know a second time.

TULLIA. Yes; I want thee to continue, if thou lovest me. Sempronia gave me only a summary account of the event; in her conversation, she did not enter into such minute details as thou.

OTTAVIA. She orders me early in the morning to get up; then, having dressed me in most costly garb which she laid aside for me, she led me to Teodoro, a man of that sect whose adherents, thanks to their faces and squalid beards and straggling gray locks, seem to the vulgar to make a great display of holiness. As soon as we were within the sanctuary, he came over to me : — « Thou hast, my daughter, » said he, « a mother » who is imploring for thee every good and holy

» thing. In three days' time thou art to be married; » thou must purify thy soul of every stain in order » to make thyself worthy and proper to receive » this heavenly gift. Thou shalt bring forth chil- » dren that, if thou art good, will obtain homes, of » which infernal spirits are deprived; but if thou » art wicked, they will swell the ranks of the » latter. What choice dost thou make? » Having become red in the face, I kept silent. « Speak, » speak, » said he. — « I wish to be good, and » them likewise, » I replied. — « Approach there- » fore. » In short, prostrated at his knees, I con- fessed everything, even the smallest things which seemed to me to be infected with the contagion of vice. When he heard me stating that I had been already stained by a lustful attempt, he was on the point of flying into a rage. Yet, having advised me to abstain from such things, he bade me be of good heart and obey my mother in every thing she could require of my submission. He then called my mother and pulling out of his right sleeve a ball of cords which he did not unravel, handed it to her. — « Do not spare your daughter's » pelt, » he says, « nor your own either; show her » the example. If you go against my orders, you » shall be punished. » Thereupon, we both walked away.

TULLIA. That is how these men make sport of

our weakness; that is how they lead us on by the nose.

OTTAVIA. Thou mightst have said with more truth : « That is how we make sport of our hus- » bands' credulity; that is how we lord over » them. » As soon as we had entered the back apartment of our house, from which apartment thou knowest there is a view of the garden, my mother shut the door : and smiling handed me the ball of cords to undo. I begin and see it is a kind of scourge composed of five very fine and closely knotted thongs. « Now, daughter, » she says, « thou must adorn and purify thyself by means of » this pious implement : but I wish to illustrate it » with an example. We received orders to lay on » the lash with all our might. I shall execute them, » thou wilt do the same, I know thou wilt. » — « I » will, » said I. — « Thou art not resolute enough, » she added, « to inflict on thyself what thou art going » to see me suffering : I will lend thee a hand. Whilst » I am singing a canticle in a low and plaintive strain, » doubt not but within my breast my soul is rejoicing » exceedingly. »

TULLIA. Did not thy tender frame quake with fear?

OTTAVIA. I was far from believing myself so courageous and so eager to undergo penance, as I appeared to my mother and myself. They truly

boast that nothing is more constant and brave than woman, whenever she wishes to endure suffering resolutely. — « Why lose time, daughter? » asked my mother on kissing me. « Pull off my gown » quickly, that the ungodly quarters of this frame » so deserving of torture may be stripped naked. » I did as she bade me. She tucked her shift up round her backside and hips. Then going on her knees and taking up the bundle of thongs : — « Atten- » tion, daughter, » she added, « and after my » example learn how to suffer. » Thereupon, we heard the gentle tapping of a finger against the door. — « I know who it is, » said my mother; « it » is the most venerable Father Teodoro; he is » coming to assist us; in fact, he promised to be » here if possible. » He tapped the door again with his finger. — « It is him, » said my mother, « it is » Teodoro; let him in, daughter. » — « What, » mother! dost thou want him to see thee naked? » I asked. — « Art thou not aware, » she answered, « that he is an old acquaintance of mine? I am indebt- » ed to him for whatever innocent charms I pos- » sess. » At all events, she let down her shift while I was opening the door. The priest had no sooner walked in, with a joyful countenance, than he began to congratulate us, and to forcibly exhort my mother to set me an example at once worthy of herself and me. He added a lot more which

stirred me up to such fury that I would have craved to be scourged by his most holy hands. Besides, he proved, by a long and carefully worded sermon, that all pudicity independent of debauch is a sin; that only those that present themselves naked to men's eyes for the sake of voluptuousness and lust have need to blush, but not those who do so out of piety and repentance. The former is disgraceful and the latter decent; the one pleases men, the other the Gods; penance of this nature is therefore of the greatest use. It serves, as a certain marvellous lavender, to wash away the foul stains which women may have contacted or received, if the lewd creatures were to inflict as many cruel tortures upon their senses, as the criminal enjoyments they reaped from their bodies. Thus these salutary chastisements efface most of the sins which women, owing to a certain guilty shame, dare not confess or expose to a priest.

TULLIA. Useful lessons for whoever is lustful and coy! Surely I am not going to find fault with these precepts of thine, Teodoro. Go on.

OTTAVIA. Well, after these exhortations, he took up the lash; my mother cast herself at his knees, I did the same. He bid me draw back a little behind my mother, keep my eyes upon her and attentively watch every stroke, no matter where it was to fall. He placed himself at my mother's left side,

and when she asked him to assist her in the holy work and as she was singing some canticle or other, a heavy shower of lashes fell upon her bare buttocks. She seemed to me to be shuddering under those lashes; lighter ones succeeded, but these were followed by heavier ones. In short, he gave the unfortunate woman such a mangling that her torn and welted buttocks, so white a little before, now seemed to curse the butcher's stall.

TULLIA. And she did not complain?

OTTAVIA. She did not even dare open her mouth; she let a sigh escape her once : « Ah, father! » said she. But he grew angry at his work. — « You shall » not go unpunished out of my hands, » he cried. He ordered her to double up her body with her head and breast inclined upon the ground. She obeyed; in this position her buttocks came into open contact with the lash, and, during a whole hour, he scourged them incessantly. — « Now that » sufficient joy has been infused into thy soul, rise, » said Teodoro. She got up, let her shift fall down about her heels and, after having put on her gown, took me, smiling, into her arms. — « It is now » thy turn, daughter. Dost thou think thou hast » courage enough for that sport? » she asked. « For » it is sport and not suffering. » — « May my bodily » strength suffice for me as well as my courage! » I answered. « What must I do? » — « Prepare your

» daughter for this pious work, » said Teodoro. « I » hope you will be stouter than your mother. » During this time, I kept my eyes rivetted upon the floor. « You are not deceiving my hope, » said he; « speak. » — « I shall endeavour, » I replied, « to » correspond with the good opinion you have » formed of me. » Meanwhile, my dress had fallen down to my heels and my mother was pulling up my shift to my hips. As soon as I felt myself naked, my face went on fire. — « Daughter, » said my mother, « thou needst not go on thy knees; remain » standing, as thou art, without stirring. » She then led me to Teodoro. — « Do you wish to be » happy? » he inquired; « do you wish to arrive » through briars at celestial pleasures? » — « I shall » not be wanting in courage, » I replied. Thereupon, he began to rouse my sensation by light lashes without hurting me. — « Could you bear harder » ones, daughter? » he inquired. — « To be sure » she could, » replied my mother. — « I could, » answered I in my turn. Then, the cruel lashes ran over the whole surface from my hips down to the calves of my legs. « Enough! enough! » I cried; « mother, have pity on me. » — « Cheer up, » said she; « wilt thou thyself finish what remains to be » done? for only one half of the work is over. » — « Quite so, » said Teodoro; « let us see how le- » nient she will be to herself. Take the scourge,

» daughter; whip this low arena of voluptuous-» ness, which thou hast there in thy person. » My mother, on putting her hand to mine, showed me how I should strike indiscriminately and with all my might that spot offered and exposed to the conjugal outrage. I gave myself a violent lash, then another and so forth, until my right hand began to lose its force. — « Mother, » said I, « I » can not bear to inflict violence upon myself; I » shall endure everything at thy hands. » I had by this inertness obtained some respite from Teodoro. I yielded up the scourge to my mother; she then resumed her mournful canticle, which she modulated with every cadent lash. I burst into tears and groans; I began to twist my buttocks at every stripe, and soon took to my heels, so that I ran over the room in all directions. — « What's » that? » inquired Teodoro. « O you cowardly » silly thing! » In fact, my mother had thrown the scourge upon the bed. « Will you not, you, » the daughter of so stout a mother, show more » courage? » — « I will, » said I; « but hinder me » from running away. Perhaps I may be able to » stifle my cries and groans. » — « Therefore obey, » daughter, » replied my mother. — « I shall be » as obedient as ever you choose, » I answered. She tied my two wrists toether with a silk ribbon, for I used to defend myself with my hands; she

then made me lean my head against the bedstead. — « Take care not to stir whilst thou art being » beaten, » said she; « shouldst thou do so, I will » look upon thee as the most unchaste and infa- » mous of all the unchaste and wicked girls. » — « I » will not move, » I answered. « Tear my wretched » skin as much as ever you please. » — « Come here, » Teodoro, » said my mother; « honour my daughter » with your good offices. » Whilst my mother was squeezing my bound hands between hers and fondly kissing me, Teodoro was lashing and tearing me to pieces. — « Bravo! bravo! » shouted my mother; « the harder the correction thou wilt » submit to, the greater the voluptuousness thou » wilt see thyself filled with. » All on a sudden Teodoro broke out : — « All right, that will do; » the sacrifice is now offered to pudency and » consummated by the shedding of virginal » blood. » He dealt me a few more lashes. He then threw my mother the scourge dripping with blood.

TULLIA. Stained, thou meanest?

OTTAVIA. Be it as it may with the scourge, my skin was certainly left in a nice pickle. — « O » daughter! » cried my mother « with what praises » shall I bear thee to the clouds as sone of the He- » roines, thee who hast so bravely endured such » a scourging? » In fine, when each of them had

congratulated me and forced me to make a solemn promise that I would be ready for fresh lashing episodes after the loss of my virginity, Teodoro left our house. When he was gone, my mother threw her arms round me and pressed me closely to her breast. « Daughter, » said she, « I want thee » to go to bed now. Pretend thou hast a headache, » although such be not the case, that thou mayest » repose thy delicate limbs and refresh thy body, » which the cursed scourge, that thou hast brav- » ed with heroic endeavour, has so direfully man- » gled. » So she put me to bed and revived my strength with some delicious food. « In troth, » said she, « I am well used to this sort of thing; I » never experience the least inconvenience from » it. » She then stuped my buttocks with cold rose water; these were houghed and torn in two places. « Go asleep now; I shall be back in two hours' » time. »

TULLIA. Dost thou know where she went? and what she did while thou wast sleeping?

OTTAVIA. No, by Venus! And withal I was fully an hour before I fell asleep : for my inflamed buttocks were scalding me, whilst some titillation or other was soothing the pain.

TULLIA. Oh! had good luck but brought Caviceo within thy reach at that time! Thy mother had despatched a swift messenger for Giocondo, on

whom she had enjoined a state of celibacy several nights. Nor had she long to wait for him. He, who knew he was called to his mistress's arms, ran to her at once. He found her in the dark room adjacent to the one thou wast sleeping in. She too was lying upon a couch; the moment he arrived, she began by her kisses, fondlings and ticklings to challenge the mentule to the fight. The latter brisked up in a trice; it dashed out of its conch to rush into Sempronia's.

OTTAVIA. How dost thou know? Who let thee into the secrets of other people's enjoyment?

TULLIA. She called on me next day in person and related me the whole affair. Thrice within one hour Giocondo pierced her vigorously with his home-driven wedge, thrice he ejected spouttuls of rain into her cistern. As for her, she distilled the humid delights seven times from out the winding cavities of her libidinous loins. She was even afraid that thou hadst overheard her voice, whilst she kept repeating in the ravings of her pleasure frenzy : — « I am dying, push, push; my heart is melting, my » heart is melting! »

OTTAVIA. Now that is quite true. For, methought I heard some murmuring or other in the next room. But it never occurred to my mind to inquire what it was. Besides, Giocondo got married six months afterwards to a desirable and handsome young girl

of sixteen, the fruit of my grandfather's intercourse with a concubine of his.

TULLIA. Add, moreover, that she was modest, timid and obsequious; that the maternal blemish had deadened in her every tendency towards pleasure.

OTTAVIA. Indeed I heard my mother upbraiding her with her birth. « A girl sprung form an » unhallowed alliance, » she used to say, « evidently » follows in her mother's steps. » But she would answer by her tears and the eloquent language of weeping.

TULLIA. The unhappy Giulia was placed among your Vestals, of whom thy aunt, Teresia, is the Superior, at the time that Giocondo, who had been already fifteen years cultivating Sempronia's ground with his hoe, began to request wages for his labour and to interlard his grievances with petitions. « I am truly thine, » such were his expressions, « but what recompense have I as yet received » from thee, Madam, to enable me to be worthily » thine and to be accredited as such? What trou- » ble hast thou taken to secure me a position? » Being poor and needy, I complain of a wealthy » mistress. Should the fates snatch thee away » from me (may the earth sooner open under me!) » what will then become of wretched me whom » thou sayest thou lovest immensely? » — « Away

» with such silly thoughts and banish from thy » mind all rash fears, » replied Sempronia. « I have » really decided on getting thee married to an » exceedingly nice little girl. I have, moreover, » at my free disposal six thousand gold pieces of » which my husband knows nothing : thou canst » have them now, if thou choosest, in ready cash. » — « Get me put crosswise, » said Giocondo, « if » ever I be unmindful of thy favours. I shall will- » ingly accept whatever condition thou art pleas- » ed to impose upon me. » — « Thou knewst Giulia, » whom Teresia took as pupil? » added Sempro- nia; « well, I give her to thee for thy wife. Thou » couldst not light upon a more chaste and comely » young girl. » — « Ah, Madam! » replied Gio- condo, « how greatly obliged I shall be to thee for so » heavenly a gift! » In short, the conditions were laid down and Giulia was married to Giocondo.

OTTAVIA. Giocondo, having become Gonsalvio has been these few years fulfilling the office of housemanager. He is invested with full power for transacting our town and country affairs. My father has constantly praised him for his diligent and scrupulous attention. I am not surprised therefore at their giving Giulia, as a recompense for past and future services, to a man who has laid our house under so many obligations. But what are the con- ditions they imposed?

TULLIA. Those six thousand gold pieces were to be paid out within four years; they were deposited until then in Guelisio's bank; at the expiration of this period, they were to be counted down to Gonsalvio, provided he fulfilled the written engagement he had agreed to; during this time he was to receive the interest. The essential points of the conditions were as follow : firstly, he should always treat his wife as Sempronia wished, nor was he to exercise his right of husband against her will; he should execute promptly and diligently whatever she intimated either orally or by writing; he should look after his master's and mistress's interest as they would themselves; he should lodge under their roof in that spacious apartment laid out for him.

OTTAVIA. Giulia was a bride and no wife; Giocondo was a married man and no husband.

TULLIA. True. For, once the wedding was over, Sempronia would not allow Giocondo to use a husband's right over Giulia more than twice, on the first night they slept together : she made him swear so, in order to reduce him to the impossibility of telling a lie. While she was lecturing, flattering and promising him wonders, she kindled so ardent a flame in Giocondo that he nimbly mounted her three times right off. As he was then completely spent, she sent him to Giulia, on forc-

ing him to swear a second time, not to go beyond two rounds in her stade; of course she could not be more than deflowered on this first night. Next day, she sifted the bride to know what the real state of things was, whether she was still a bride or whether she had become a wife in her husband's arms. But she testified her coyness by blushes, downcast eyes and silence; she at last confessed that she had been twice attacked by her husband. So Sempronia desired her to be pressed twice more on the following night, and her loins to be bound at sunrise by a girdle of chastity, on barring the orifice of Venus with a portcullis suspended from the girdle; nor was he permitted to enjoy her again before eight days' time. What a singular thing! from that night until now, she has had carnal knowledge of her husband but fifteen times only and thus she feels herself still a bride.

OTTAVIA. I heard my mother saying something or other to Giulia a few days ago about a girdle of chastity. But I do not know how this girdle can make women chaste.

TULLIA. Thou wilt learn it. Next day, when Giulia was getting up, Giocondo drew nigh. Once the witnesses were out of sight, he displayed the famous belt. She on laughing : — « What is the » meaning of that thing thou hast there, whereon » I see shining gold? » she inquired. — « Thou

» wilt please put on this girdle of chastity, this » very instant, » he replied, « in order to preserve » thee from the maternal blemish. They call this » thing a girdle of chastity; my mistress, Sempro- » nia, wore it several years before thee; it is now » thy turn to clap it on. Owing to it, she won her » high reputation; I hope thou wilt also acquire as » good a one. » The gold portcullis was suspended by four little iron-chains overlaid with velveting and rivetted with similar art into a belt of metal to match. Two of the chains on one side and two on the other held up the girdle by being passed through it behind and before. The girdle was fastened behind above the hips by means of a lock adapted to a very small key. The portcullis, being about six inches high by three in width, thus ran from the perineum to the edge of the outer lips; it covered the whole space which extends between the two thighs and the bottom of the uterus. As it is formed of three open bars, the urine finds an outlet, whilst it refuses an entrance even to the tops of one's fingers. Thus that part is protected as it were by a cuirass against foreign mentules; only he to whom the law of Hymen allotted it has an easy access to it whenever he chooses.

OTTAVIA. What must the bride have said to herself?

TULLIA. What thou thyself wilt say in a few days,

because they are also preparing a similar kind of apparatus for thee.

OTTAVIA. I was not aware of what Caviceo was up to when he said, concerning the girdle of chastity, that it was the surest defence of honest women's virtue, and when he asked me whether I would be willing to put on one as my mother would advise me.

TULLIA. « What must I do? » asked Giulia, whilst her husband was throwing aside the bedclothes. » — « Put, » said he, « one foot into these » two chains and the other into those. » Both feet being in, he pulled up the girdle, placed the portcullis before the slit, bound the pit of her stomach, a little above the hips, with the girdle and locked it. « Now, » said he, « thy pudency is secured; it » it all right, but wilt thou think hard of wearing » it? » — « Certainly not, » she replied. Thereupon, he bid her rise naked, get out of bed and walk about. She rose, as she had been ordered, jumped out of bed, and advanced a few steps; she said she could not walk so readily as before, being obliged to spread out her legs owing to the huge size of the portcullis.

— « Never mind, » said he, « thou wilt become » accustomed to it; I do not wonder at thy not » feeling at ease, this being new to thee. » He then ordered her to lie prone upon the ground. She did

so; he viewed with admiration her back and buttocks, for they say Nature formed her frame perfectly sleek and symmetrical. He wished to try whether one could introduce a finger or a like object into her cleft; so presenting his finger he felt that an entrance was impossible. « All is safe, » said he. Directly, he rushed straight off to Sempronia. « Now, Madam, » says he, « accept two keys, » but this one first » (he showed his mentule), « for » I am on the point of liquefying. » — « I will glady » accept them, » replied Sempronia. And, rolling up her petticoats and shift, she cast herself upon her back on the nearest bed. He thrusted in the yard, and, the horses being let loose, both where borne swiftly unto the supreme pleasure which they tasted. The work done : — « I now return thee » this key of thine which fits my lock so nicely, » said Sempronia : « give me the other one » — « Here » it is, » replied Giocondo; « take it. » — « Now learn, » added Sempronia, « what my will is. Thou » shalt have intercourse with Giulia only for the sake » of begetting children, whilst thou must satisfy all » thy desires with me. I wish thee to be really a » husband with respect to her, but a woer and a » paramour with me. I shall therefore give thee » back this key only at the end of every fortnight, » when thou shalt have previously watered my » garden with thy rain twice at least. Now I do not

» want Giulia to know thy prowess in these engagements, nor the endurance of thy loins, nor » the vigour of thy muscles. But I should like she » were to believe that all husbands act thus with » their wives. I shall, meanwhile, entreat my aunt, » Teresia, either to suppress or extinguish her » flames by occasional lectures and corrections. If » thou wilt love and obey me as thou hast done up » to the present, if thou, my sole and constant » pleasure, be not discontented with me, thou wilt » have in me a mistress whose bounty will exceed » thy most sanguine expectations : otherwise, a » deadly enemy. Thou art aware that women either » love or hate : that there is no medium. » — « I accept the condition, » said he; « what man could » be happier than I, whom the loveliest and best » of women impregnates with voluptuousnesses, » whilst my truly charming wife will bear me children? Now I offer her to thee as thy exclusive » right and resign her to thee altogether; shouldst » thou require it, I will not sleep with her lest she » might become inflamed with lust at my contact, » as she is ardent, blooming and remarkably » healthy. » — « God forbid I should do your » conjugal bed such a wrong! » exclaimed Sempronia. « Let me know whenever thou seest her kindled : » with the help of Teresia, who is wholly at my beck, » the fire will be put out. I am glad she inflames

» thee for my Venus, as was the case just now. » So she begrudged the wife her husband, wanting to make her own of Giocondo as if he were joined to her in stable wedlock.

OTTAVIA. She had also a grudge against thee, I think.

TULLIA. She had; and, that I should not have to complain of being outwitted by her, she changed Giocondo for Lampridio. This Lampridio was one of those Anchorites, who shun the very sight of man; but as he found himself still free from every tie, he took shipping, returned to his country and home, as a deserter. He has an immense deal of property, but the citizens hold him in low repute on account of his having changed his state of life. Therefore, though amiable, noble, rich and youthful, he made fruitless efforts, first, to get married to Lucidia, and then to Livia, two noble young ladies. Exasperated at this affront, which stung him to the very heart, he abandoned every hope and desire of marriage. Thy father, who had just returned from a sort of exile, offered him hospitality as they were connected by affinity and a close friendship. As I frequent your house, we have often spoken together, and he has been insensibly led to admire my wit and call Callias a fortunate man; as for himself, he states that, if good luck threw such a mistress as I am in his path, he

would not have to envy the Gods their felicities. Sempronia persuaded me to deliver him of his rising passion, by acts of kindness, sweet words and cajoleries. « For, shouldst thou succeed in » setting him on fire with thy love, » she would say, « nothing will ever separate him from thee : » death alone will deprive thee of him. I know the » man's constancy and character; he pursues all » his relations and kindred with a just resentment; » it is more than certain he will convert his whole » fortune to thy family use. » Briefly, it is very rare indeed that the woman who knows she is loved does not love the man whose affections are concentrated in her. I was growing fond of Lampridio, and a little while after, with Sempronia's zealous aid, we agreed to the following conditions : he (Lampridio) was to make over a part of all his goods to Callias by a public act, and, in case he should die without a will, name Callias his sole heir; on the other hand, he was to obtain full power over me by an engagement in my own hand-writing, without my being, however, bound to anything before concluding the agreement with Callias : which was signed shortly after by consent of the interested parties to the great joy of Sempronia. On the same day, before Lampridio had bid adieu to your place, I called upon Sempronia glittering with finery

and ornaments so as to add fresh beauties to my form. Lampridio arrived, and casting himself directly at my knees : « I adore thee, » Goddess, » said he; « certainly thou shalt be » always a Goddess to me. Suffer a mortal to enjoy » thy divine comeliness. I have kept my promises; » thou too keep thine. » — « She will, » replied Sempronia; « may you both live happy; one will be a » sufficient felicity for the other, if you know where » your goods lie. For the present, treat your own » affairs. » So saying, she walked out and locked the door.

OTTAVIA. What did Lampridio do then?

TULLIA. He stood up, kissed me, handled my paps and tossed me over upon the bed, struggling like a woman that wished to let herself be overcome; and, rolling up my petticoat and shift, he slipped his right hand in between my thighs. « Stop, stop, begone, begone, » I cried; « thou art ruining me. Could I afterwards dare » raise my eyes and look at the heavens? Why » dost thou dishonour me? » He interrupted my voice with kisses. He then drove the truncheon vigorously; my itching vulva on feeling it swallowed it in one go, and, the very moment it was inside, I felt myself drenched with a heavy shower of seed : beneficent Venus had never before caused so copious a shower to fall into my garden. Even

now I die of joy, my dear Ottavia, when I think of that hour, the enjoyments of which greatly surpassed those of all the days in my life. Lampridio did not yet fail: he began fresh assaults; I melted away on two occasions. He at length ejected into my furrow, so long dug with his solid spade, a stream which sprung from his libidinous loins.

OTTAVIA. To be sure thou hast a Hercules, according to thy own saying; he is not like other men.

TULLIA. After the second ejaculation he resumed his former thrusts. Well, I candidly confess he makes assaults succeed assaults. Only once, as I have already informed thee, did Callias do it twice to me in one run; whereas this fellow has done it three times, and I think very few of those dear to Venus have as yet arrived at this mark. In the same moment a very sharp prurience came over me; all my senses were lost in Venus. I had conserved until then some appearance of shame and resolution : I even forgot myself on that moment. My feet were hanging out of the low bed, and a violent rage seized upon me to reply to my rider's thrusts; I leaned upon my feet, raising my uterus and loins as high as ever I could : I used to meet him as he would be thrusting downwards. Then he gave me a smack, and slipping his hand under my buttocks : — « Now I feel I please thee, Ma-

» dam, » said he, « act then. » — « What shall I » do? » I replied, « I am mad. » On the same instant my wild eyes closed, my soul sank in the midst of reciprocal thrusting, and, a prey to a maddening titillation, I felt myself melting away into a flood of matter. Lampridio, on observing it, stamped, pushed and fluttered : soon after he, too, struck me with a scalding jet of seed.

OTTAVIA. Thou art stirring me unto lust. Thy story would make Vesta more wanton than are the sparrows consecrated to Venus.

TULLIA. Lampridio, on retiring, gave me a sweet kiss, as I still lay flat upon my back. — « We shall » shortly return to the fight, » he says, « What » opinion wouldst thou really form of me, if, with » so brave a rival as thou art, I had shown myself » a cowardly athlete? » As for me, when I wanted to get out of bed, I saw I was overcome with lassitude. I required his aid to rise to my feet; nor could I help, whatever efforts I made, falling back upon the side of the bed. — « Alack! » I cried, « thou hast wasted all my strength, reducing me » to a state of impotence by that extravagance of » thine, Lampridio. What am I do to? I can never » get home. » — « Repair thy body with rest, dear » Goddess, » said he, « and if possible, with a short » sleep. I am quite nimble and cheerful. And why » not, since I have satisfied my passion with thee,

» a woman of celestial beauty and more desirable » than Venus? I am going away; rest thyself in » the meantime. » When he had said this, Sempronia arrived smiling and humming some free and graceful air or other. — « How have you sealed » the treaty between you? » she inquired; « how » have you overwhelmed yourselves with your » goods? How goes it? » — « As for me, » I replied, « it is all over with me, » on wiping away a few tears that flowed in spite of me. — « Why dost » thou weep, Madam? » asked Lampridio; « I am » thy servant, avenge thyself as thou choosest on » a saucy fellow who had the boldness to dive into » thy delights. » — « Hush! » replied Sempronia; » how did she satisfy thy pleasure? Hast thou » found her agreeable and proper for lust? » — « Never, » said he, « was man happier than I; » every voluptuousness I could imagine or even » form an idea of, I have found with her. » — « But » thou, Tullia, speak, » said Sempronia to me; » « have thy senses been fully satisfied? Has Lam- » pridio pleased thee? » — « He has indeed », I replied « and to such a degree that nothing better or » sweeter could be desired. But how wretched am » I! he has worried my members, and my loins » are so fatigued, that I can hardly walk three » paces. » — « How wretched thou art! ah! ah! » replied Sempronia; « thou retire, Lampridio. » —

« I will, » said he, « if Tullia grant me forgiveness, » if she confess in thy presence that she loves me. » — « And I do forgive thee, » I answered, « and I » am very fond of thee, who, from off the summit » of that pudency on which I prided myself, hast » cast me into this opprobrium, which now covers » me with confusion. » Then, having kissed me, he went away; but Sempronia ran after him. — « Two words, please, » said she; « stop. Whatever » we talk of can not reach Tullia's ears. Speak » openly. Didst thou encounter on her the delights » thou wast expecting? » — « Far greater ones, » replied he, « than I had anticipated. Tullia's shape, » colloquy and charms are all, all divine. What » thanks can I return thee for so inestimable a » gift, a gift that transports me to the skies? » Now, I beg thee to obtain that, before the day » closes, she may allow me to satisfy myself on » her embraces. » — « Thou art wrong to satiate » thyself, » replied Sempronia; « it is neither thy » interest nor hers that either of you should be » filled to satiety. » — « I have spoken foolishly, » he answered; « but thou comprehendest the drift » of this petition. » — « I shall keep her for thee in » this room until dusk, » said Sempronia : « her » husband is to sup with us. To-morrow, on thy » removing as a guest to their house, thou wilt » have more liberty with her; that will be handier

» and more fortunate for both. Go and care thy per-
» son. » — « I will, » said he, and then walked away. As soon as Sempronia came back to me, she related to me the conversation she had with Lampridio; she likewise asked me how I was getting on. I told her how I complained of being overcome by a very heavy weariness. — « I am going at once, » said she, « to restore thee thy force worn away by such
» hard labour; a good solid luncheon and a little
» repose will make thee all right again. Let thyself
» go asleep, while I am going for Callias, who is
» undoubtedly calling thee, as I presume, to battle.
» I shall tell him thou hast a headache. »

OTTAVIA. Perhaps the Callias she called was Giocondo.

TULLIA. Giocondo was in the country on that day, being sent to the farmers. I had barely begun to close my eyes, when I heard a noise at the doom; on its being opened, I beheld a very copious luncheon arriving. — « Rise, » said Sempronia, « this
» nourishment will cure thee of the headache.
» Up. » I ate, drank heartily and my force was restored immediately. Jumping out of bed, I embraced my friend Sempronia; I congratulated myself on my lucky chance. After about two hours absence, Lampridio put in an appearance, on bowing to the ground to us; there were a few servants present. When these were gone, he set to praise

me and return me thanksgiving; but Sempronia interrupted him. — « Now here is the rub, » said she, « we must devise a plan and means to live well » and in safety. Take care you don't open Callias' » eyes. What a calamity would then hover over » your heads should he get an inkling of your » doings! » — « I have nothing at all to fear from » him, » replied Lampridio, « either for myself or » my lady, even were he the most perspicacious » of men, provided she will let herself be ruled by » my advice. » — « I am quite willing, » I rejoined, » to let myself be guided by thy directions; from » this day forward Tullia's soul shall be very » submissive to thee. » — « In the first place, » said he, « I know Callias' Character : he is neither good » nor bad, but might be easily made one or the » other. I promise thee, Madam, that within a » few days he will grow exceedingly friendly and » familiar with me. I shall try and get out of him » his most secret thoughts : leave the rest to my » ingenuity. Be especially upon thy guard against » letting him perceive from thy looks, mouth or » manners anything betokening or denoting our » mutual passion. I will have to give thee sundry » counsels, nay rather hard ones, whenever I see » thy interest and mine at stake, whether it be for » thy own safety or to secure our love. Our entire » welfare and happiness will depend upon the role

» thou wilt fulfil in this comedy. » — « Fear » nothing, » I replied, « on my part. I shall be » exceedingly prudent and submissive. » — « Exceed- » ingly submissive? » he repeated, « now I shall » see : I want a kiss. » — « Here it is, » replied I. — « I want a smack and not a kiss, » said he. — « Here it is, » I answered. — « I want to be hugged, » said he. — « I will hug thee, » I replied. — « I want » a complete enjoyment. » I remained silent. — « Thou art mute, Madam? » said he. « So thou » refusest me this bliss? » — « Use thy right, thou » silly fellow! » replied Sempronia; « dost thou » expect her to lift thee upon her charger? I will wait » over there near the door; for the servants, knowing » thou art here, would, as they are mischievous and » forward, wonder at thy being left all alone with » Tullia. » He still continued pressing me to allow him to rid himself of his amourous passion, in my embraces; and, seeing we were somewhat out of Sempronia's sight : « Of what ar thou afraid? » he inquired; « Sempronia is on sentry. » He then shoved me upon the bed, and, trying to have me in a convenient position, he carried my hand to his mentule, begging me to take hold of it. — « What! » said I, « thou wilt force me unto such baseness? » I drew back my hand. He got upon me, as I was stretched supinely, with my uncovered groins, awaiting the dagger's point in my shield, which was neither

white nor inglorious. He removed his drawers; then, reclining upon my breast and pressing his belly against mine, he drove the weapon in. — « Now, thou art going to show that thou lovest » me, » said he. — « Dost thou doubt, » I replied, « of my loving thee, now that thou hast me sub- » jected to all thy lust? » — « Discharge therefore » thy functions nobly and bravely. » — « I will, » said I. Then he fell to fluttering most vehemently; I began to shake and toss up my waving buttocks, and to move my hips flexibly. He was the first to experience a titillation of the approaching crisis; but he exerted all his might and constant activity to second my rising sensation, and I soon felt Venus' fountain springing up inside of my loins. — « Ah! ah! » I murmured; « why torment » me? stop, stop, I am fainting! » There issued from me, exactly at this moment, some Venereal dew, as a sweet offering to my lover. Hereupon, Sempronia shouted : — « Beware! beware! I hear Callias coming towards us. » I dismounted my rider before he had quite finished, for, when his mentule had gone out of my conch, it polluted my belly by distilling scalding drops over it. A moment after : — « It is nothing, it is nothing, » said Sempronia. « Some voice or other has deceived » my ears. » She had no sooner spoken than Lampridio again leaped upon me, drove in the spear

a second time and began a fresh engagement. « Thou art killing me, » said I; « withdraw for a » while. Thou art bringing a weakness over me; » I will call Sempronia. » He remained the whole time quite undaunted, making me reel with rapid thrusts. He stirred up fresh flames in me; a lot of slime trickled from Venus's fountain hidden within my loins; he again soothed me with his prurient seed; and, had not Sempronia, on coming over to us, put an end to the fight, his inexhaustible lubricity would have gone to the third effusion. — « The game is carried far enough, » said she; « I fear not the snares of men, but those of » Fortune. » We both descended from the bed, and Sempronia greatly busied herself lest anything, such as rumples on my dress, my hair tossed about or other personal disorder, might charge me with my wanton crime. « I wish thou hadst, » Lampridio, » she added, « as swift a horse as thou » art a good and remarkable runner! » — « I am no » runner, » he retorted, « but a slave and a slave » with all my heart; I have no horse either, I have » a mistress that bore me to the highest pitch of » pleasure. » Thus our wedding was first held at Sempronia's, and under her eyes; she fostered, as it were in her own bosom, our budding love. So I am in her debt for my Lampridio, who shall be also thine; he is young, graceful, polite, vigorous

and able; Hercules' force and groins are not superior to his in a strife of this kind; Æneas would have to yield to him in point of chest and utensils : his chest is broad and solid, whilst his utensils are nicely adapted to the work of which we go to form the victory and triumph.

OTTAVIA. Pray do go on, dear Tullia, with your story, the recital of which delights me exceedingly. Run slightly over the principal features at least; tell me what he was like with thee on the first days.

TULLIA. Thou art jesting, thou silly creature. With him the last day does not differ from the first; his heat, ardour and burning love for me are always the same. We both had supper on that first night in your house with thy parents, Callias was also of the party. No need to relate the conversation they had between them. We returned home. Callias had a lot to say about Lampridio : how he was very mannerly; how he himself was swept into a close friendship with him; how he seemed an upright, orderly and intelligent youth. Venus succeeded Bacchus. So when he saw me undressing myself and the bared globes of my breasts swelling out (for the late hour of night intimated rest), before I would get into bed, he seized me by the hand and led me to that bridal closet, next to our alcove. « This spot, » said he,

« will become sacred to Venus and the Muses. » With one hand he lifted the petticoat and shift, and with the other he carried the long, heavy and unusually stiff and well tuned mentule to my grot. « Stretch thy loins over me, darling Tullia, » said he. I did so. Then, making a charge, he broke into my vulva and occupied the whole local; he pursued his delights with rapid thrusts, and roused himself unto fresh ardours. I imitated him in heaving my loins with an animated and well timed under-movement. He seized with each hand the two cheeks of my backside and kept drawing them out and pulling them into himself very violently. I was the first to feel the fiery stings of the approaching crisis, so I let go; Callias accelerated my ecstasy : « My veins are melting, aye, aye! » I kept up a very spirited movement until the last gust of seed was over; my vulva, once the marital tube was exhausted, operated especially to help him unto the supreme pleasure by squeezing and sucking the beloved mentule. The act over : « I want » thee now, » said Callias, « to come to an understan- » ding with me about our future schemes, Madam : » for thou shalt be always my lady. » — « Indeed » I agree, » I answered, « to whatever thou pleasest; » what thou commandest me to refuse, I quite » refuse. Be it a crime and a disgrace for me not » to have the same sentiments as thou throughout

» the whole course of my life! What dost thou re-
» quire, Sir, of my obedience? » — « Truly, » said
he, « I am fully persuaded that thou art exceedingly
» honest and chaste, although it is a common saying
» that literate women are seldom over-virtuous; yet
» I fear for thy virtue, unless we both come to its
» aid. » — « What act, what fault have I committed
» to put such an idea into thy head, my heart? »
I asked; « what opinion hast thou formed of me?
» Withal, I do not wish to depreciate any scheme
» thou mayest have fostered. » — « I want, » said
he, « to put a girdle of chastity on thee; if thou art
» chaste, thou wilt not be annoyed at it; but, if
» not, it is thy business to see how right I am in
» doing what I propose. » — « I will put on me what-
» ever thou choosest, » I replied; « be it what
» it may, I shall gladly wear it, as I was born to
» be thine : I shall heartily be a wife for only thee
» and live isolated from the rest of men, whom I
» despise and detest. I shall neither speak to Lam-
» pridio nor look at him. » — « Don't act thus, » said
he; « on the contrary, I wish thee to act friendly
» and decently with him, so that neither he nor I
» may have any reason to complain of thee : he,
» in case thou didst treat him to rudely, and I,
» shouldst thou make too free with him. But the
» girdle of chastity will permit thee to live at grea-
» ter liberty with him, whilst offering me full secu-

» rity on the side of Lampridio. » Then with a silk ribbon which he placed round my body above the hips, he measured the size the girdle should be of round the thick part of my body; with another ribbon, he took the measure of the space from my groins to my hips. This done : « Even in this mat- » ter, » said he, « I shall try and let thee see how » greatly I esteem thee. The little chains, which » are to be overlaid with velveting, will be of gold; » the portcullis will be of gold, the gold opening » will be studded over with precious stones. The » most famous goldsmith of our town will, as he » is under great obligations to me, set to work at » it that it may be a master-piece of his art. I » shall be but conferring an honour upon thee, while » seeming to be doing thee a wrong. » I asked him how long it would take to make this girdle. « It » will be ready in a fortnight, » he answered; « but » in the meantime thou shouldst not endeavour » to captivate Lampridio by free conversations; » later on thou mightst act with him as thou » shouldst think fit. » We got into bed and, on that night, he did it three times to me; thrice he poured the libidinous floods into my bark, to our excessive pleasure.

OTTAVIA. How dear thou art to Venus! thou whose garden Venus had, in so short a space of time, watered with the ejections of nine consecutive

coitions! And hast thou been able to promptly obey the rider, in these races?

TULLIA. Of course I have, and even set off at full speed in the last race; as the amourous rain seemed as if unwilling to fall from the marital spout, I bounced, shook and fluttered so much that it finally discharged a very copious supply, inspite of it. Sempronia came next day to see me; I related the whole thing to Lampridio, who arrived shortly after,

... a new inhabitant to our lands.

OTTAVIA. But he had no relation with thee on that day?

TULLIA. No; not before ten days after. During that time I had no familiar conversation with him; we saw that Callias had an eye upon us, as also his footmen whom he ordered to watch us :

... The worst thing, a mischievous valet's tongue.

Thou knowest these fellows' fooleries and wickedness. But kiss me, for I behold in thy countenance some of the features of a noble Frenchman who soldierly discharged at me, last year, in Rome his catapult, under the auspices of, and through the intermediary of, Lampridio; his three assis-

tant mates who had accompanied him and sweated in digging me, though solid and robust fellows, did not at all procure me so singular an enjoyment.

OTTAVIA. What miracle do I hear? Thou didst run four men dry, thou who art so tender and so pretty? Thy loins were not broken under so many riders?

TULLIA. Thou shalt learn that another time. But shall I finish the recital which I began?

OTTAVIA. Do, please.

TULLIA. On the following day, when Lampridio came to live in our house, Callias said he wanted to go to our country property, near Ancona. Thou knowest the beauty and splendour of our town. As he mentioned it at supper, Lampridio said he would be happy to accompany him, if that would please him : « For, » continued he, « I am very » fond of enjoying the open air. Nothing could please » me more than to go to the country with you. » They stayed there together seven whole days, and Callias grew so accustomed to Lampridio's society, that he at once laid open to him his mind and most secret thought. Callias bragged of my wit, manners and refinement; he said that of all women I shone especially by the lustre of chastity. — « But you » are not so soft, » said Lampridio, « as not to » act as least in such a way that, even though she

» were unwilling to live chastely, which I hope » will not be the case, she may not be defiled. » Certainly, a man should trust his wife first with » her own chastity, then her waiting-maids; but » the safest custodian of all is a good lock. A wife » may deceive her husband, servants may be cor- » rupted, whereas there is no seducing or deceiv- » ing a good lock. » — « I quite agree with you, » replied Callias, « and Stefano, the goldsmith, is » making a grate which is to serve my dear Tullia's » citadel as a kind of outer fence. » — « It was wise » of you, » said Lampridio, « to charge this arti- » ficer with its execution. To tell you the truth, » I wish and heartily desire to be united with you » by the eternal bond of friendship; but, as we » are all mistrutsful, I was afraid that if I made » too free with your wife, and it could hardly » be otherwise, I would awaken your suspicion, » which would be burdensome to you and inju- » rious to me. Now, when you will have secured » her with a lock, you will have nothing further » to fear or suspect. In the meantime I shall return » to town to-morrow with your permission, and » be back here on the following day. The courier » is to bring a letter for me to-morrow from Venice; » it is to contain information about a most im- » portant transaction; so in looking after my own » business, I also do yours. » Lampridio came the-

refore on the tenth day, being requested by Callias to hurry Stefano, for whom he had a letter as also one for me. — « Now to let you clearly » see, » said Callias, « how fully convinced I am » of having in you an *alter ego*, I intrust you with » the greatest secret : my wife does not wish any » man should know that I entertain doubts about » her morality, of which I must. evidently have an » exact knowledge. » When Lampridio had got to my room, he found me surrounded by a circle of friends : among them, Sempronia shone with beauty and elegance. He made them all a very polite bow, and, handing me Callias's letter, said that the little gold chains and the rest of the apparatus would be ready in three or four days. He then retired. When he came back, he found me alone with Sempronia. — « It's all-right, Madam, » said he; « in a few days your girdle will be finished, » and its gold gate, ornamented with precious » stones, will sparkle and glitter so much, owing » to its richness, that your very pudency will be » proud to have it set in front of your garden. » He then placed the object under our eyes by a most graphic description. « But, » said he, « the key is » not yet forged; and while I was amusing the » goldsmith with diverse anecdotes, I stamped its » shape by some lucky chance on this piece of » was. Well, Sempronia! we shall both spend,

» according to your wish, a life of bliss. » He then related how shrewdly and cleverly he insinuated himself into Callias's intimacy, so that nothing could be now more closely connected than their souls. — « You are a fortunate man! » cried Sempronia, « owing to this double conjuction, une- » qualled by any earthly happiness : a spiritual » conjunction with Callias and a corporeal one » with Tullia. Happy friend, happy lover! you » are now put into full possession of each other, a » possession you may enjoy at your ease. But » which of these conjunctions seems to you the » sweeter? » — « You doubt about it? » replied he; » ask Tullia. » — « It would be foolish and absurd » of me, I answered, were I to imagine that any » sweetness could be had from me, and that Lam- » pridio could obtain a relish of true voluptuousness » from my person. » — « Yes, I did, » he rejoined; « and may my soul be turned into a rock and my » heart into brass, if ever I fancy I could gather » sweeter fruit of voluptuousness from Venus! » — « Let us put an end to these sallies of your court- » ship, » said Sempronia; « supper is on the table. » As for me, Tullia, I shall sleep with thee to-night : » my husband is away. » — « And what will you do » with me? » said Lampridio. — « I do not want, ho- » wever, » replied Sempronia, « to frustrate your de- » signs, Lampridio; the whole thing will be all right. »

OTTAVIA. And Sempronia slept with thee, Lampridio lay in the middle? Did he chance to sweat for you both?

TULLIA. Not at all, As it was late in the night when supper was over, we were sleepy and Lampridio was shown into his room. Sempronia had by herself clapped on her girdle of chastity, and Vittorio had carried away the key in his pocket, when setting out for Verona, about a law-suit; he took Giocondo with him to keep him sompany on the way. At the first waking Lampridio came, as it was arranged between us, and crept in over the bed-stock where I was lying. « What » do you want? who are you? » I shouted. — « I » am your servant, Madam, » he replied. He gave me a kiss and mounted me on the instant; I was naked. — « Now then, » said he, « I am going to enjoy all thy beauty. » With a free and wanton hand he felt for my vulva and presently ran his stiff weapon through it, fired as it was ever since his first contact, with that ardour which swift Mars infuses into Venus. Well, to sum up in one word the pleasures and joys of that night, he made my horse go to the twelfth round in almost a single breath.

OTTAVIA. O Venus! what do I hear? Caviceo is put to his nines to do it to me three times in a whole night.

TULLIA. Callias, while astraddle on my charger, accomplished the seventh round on two occasions; Giocondo has gone to the eighth or ninth with Sempronia. But we must not be in any way surprised at Lampridio: he has an inexhaustible well of voluptuousness situated in his loins. This thou wilt acknowledge on to-morrow night.

OTTAVIA. My mother was asleep during the while, and did not partake of your exercises and sports?

TULLIA. She had, on the previous night, got an excellent furbishing. Vittorio had made her vibrate on six occasions that night with prurient thrusts, while Giocondo had freighted her bark with his goods three times in the afternoon.

OTTAVIA. But what became in the meanwhile of the unfortunate Giulia?

TULLIA. I will tell thee when I know what became of the fortunate Ottavia, once her maidenhead was snatched away. For on her account I am afraid of Teodoro.

OTTAVIA. Thou art right to remind me of him, ah! ah! ah!

TULLIA. Thou art laughing? Thy promises vanished away, and no honour was to be paid to thy ruined virginity, as thou wast wont to say.

OTTAVIA. No; they were not dispersed with the winds; but the pain became an incitement to

burning lust, and an unregretted increase of the sweetest pleasure.

TULLIA. As pain borders on pleasure, so pleasure borders on pain.

OTTAVIA. Three days after Callias's sleeping with me, my mother reminded me of the resolution and engagement I had formed under the direction of Teodoro. « Thou owest thy virginity » obsequies, » said she, « thou owest it a funeral, » since it has been until now thy constant and worthy » companion. » — « I do think so, mother, » I replied, « and I shall fulfil, whenever thou likest, » the engagement which thou didst force me to » make. » In short, we called upon Teodoro, who bid us return in the afternoon when the sun would be about setting in the west. We did so. He led me away to a little back chapel in the church, and, on shutting the door and bolting it : « Daughter, » thou hast nothing, » said he, « to fear from indis- » creet eyes, for I am the prior of this convent; » we shall do things quietly. » He then entered upon a sermon intended to strengthen and embolden me. With my head to one side and my eyes rivetted on the ground while he was preaching, I felt so completely disposed by his harangue for all sorts of tortures that, had he decreed my death, I would have undergone it cheerfully. See, dear Tullia, how awfully he captivated my rea-

son. When he saw that he had me perfectly subject to his will : « Your mother, » said he, « is going » to show you the example in this exercise of aus» terity. » — « It is not at all necessary, » I replied. « Holy man, vent your wrath upon me, who, of » my own free will consented to the slaughter of » my maidenhead, it being such a precious thing. » — « I will not permit thee, » cried my mother, « to bear » alone these chastisements, for I also gave consent » to this murder. »

TULLIA. A nice subject for discussion, truly!

OTTAVIA. — « It's all right, » said Teodoro. « Now I shall soon see which of you has the grea» ter courage. Be ready, Sempronia. » — « Lend me » a hand; daughter, » said my mother « that I » may the more speedily discharge this pious » duty. » I opened her underdress, tunic and gown; she herself tucked up her shift above her hips, and, kneeling before the altar : « Holy man, do » not spare my sinful flesh, » said she; « purify the » field of my lubricity, by dint of lashing. » — « Hand me therefore that instrument of piety, » said Teodoro. — « I have forgotten, » she answered, « to take it out of my petticoat-pocket. » While she was then getting it out of it, being in a side direction, leaning to the left, I stared at all the lower structure of her person : her exceedingly white buttocks were raised to a most suitable

height for Venus; her legs were thick and smooth. Nature has formed nothing more perfect or fairer.

TULLIA. Thou art silent about her privy part.

OTTAVIA. I was standing behind her, so that I could not rightly see it; withal I saw it. Teodoro, on laying hold of the scourge, bid her be of good heart. Then muttering some set formula or other, as if he were humming a funeral chant, he laid a regular shower of lashes on her loins, buttocks and calves. But on allowing her a short truce : « Bend your body and lower it as much as ever you » can, » said he, « that you may also receive the » chastisement you deserve in the spot which the » law of matrimony suffers to be polluted. » Her loins when bent gave greater relief to the buttocks and exposed the front place between her thighs. I cast my eyes on the affair : a place covered over with black crisped hair of moderate length; the long gaping cleft was of a lively red colour. At this moment a heavy shower of stripes fell upon the conch, a regular mark for the lashes. — « Oh! » oh! oh! I am fainting! » she murmured; « stop » a while. You are striking heavier than I can bear » it. » — « You are insane, Sempronia, » replied Teodoro. Thereupon he meted her out a most dreadful flogging; she burst into tears and sobbing, keeping withal in the same posture. « Raise thy breast now, » said Teodoro. She obeyed, and im-

mediately lifting up her shift above her navel, she stripped her belly, thighs and the front of her person. I was gazing with admiration, when that happy butcher, on changing his place, came to the right side of the wretched...

TULLIA. Ay, a butcher fit to be quartered! What more did he require to whet that savage cruelty of his?

OTTAVIA. Listen. He cast sheep's eyes at that spot. But when he saw it naked and within his reach, he instantly began to flog most furiously, and the first lashes fell three or four inches below the navel. — « Strike higher, » she shouted, on heaving a sigh. He then directed the shower of blows under the lower belly towards the thighs and the place between them, so that the floods of tears flowing from her eyes at this torture bore witness to her dreadful suffering. A calm finally sprung up for the wretched woman after the storm; the lashing episode ceased. She then kissed the ground and, putting on her clothes, turned to me :— « Now, daughter, » said she, « it is thy » turn; pass therefore into the camp of fortitude, » I am just leaving it. » She loosed my gown, and, when it had dropped down about my feet, she pulled up my shift as far as it could go and fastened it round me, so that she exposed my naked members, behind and before, to Teodoro's eyes and lash. —

« Wilt thou be courageous? » she asked me. « The » transports of joy which succeed this momentary » suffering and spring up within the breast, thou » thyself wilt feel, nor can I express them in words. » Now go on thy knees. » — « How I should wish, » said I, « thou wert to discharge this office thyself, » mother! Indeed I shall resolutely and bravely » bear, as thou thyself, those stripes which thou, » in order to purify me, wilt inflict upon me. » — « That can not be, » she replied; « thou art as well » as I under Teodoro's control. But shall I tie thy » hands? » — « Please, » said I. And they were bound as I wished, so that I could not make use of them even were I to try.

TULLIA. During this time Teodoro's eyes feasted on the flower of thy beauty?

OTTAVIA. Ay; on putting his mouth up to my ear, he whispered into in that I should perform and endure daring feats and that I should be magnanimous.

TULLIA. Livy tells us that it is thus the part of a Roman to perform and endure daring things.

OTTAVIA. — « I want to try whether you sur- » pass your mother in fortitude, » Teodoro says to me. « If you remain tongue-tied, you will carry off » the palm. » And stretching out the palm of his hand, he patted me alternatively on each cheek of my backside; then, turning in two finger nails,

he gripped my skin as with a pincers and roughly tore off the piece. Yet I kept silent by holding in my breath and repressing a groan at the bottom of my breast. Then, after having spread his eager and prying hand all over the pubis as far as the perineum, he seized, likewise with the tops of his nails, three or four hairs of my fleece and at the same time plucked them out; notwithstanding all that, I did not evince the slightest emotion of suffering.

TULLIA. Thou art brave, Ottavia. What is Cato compared with thee? But had thy mother to undergo the same kind of torture?

OTTAVIA. — « Lift up your clothes, Sempronia, » said Teodoro to her; « display that infamy of » yours. » No sooner said than she drew her bare backside near him. He stuck his nails into it; she shuddered, and, overcome with the pain, she tossed up one of her legs; yet she said nothing.

TULLIA. This is the first act of the comedy; I am awaiting a second one from bearded Cincinnatus.

OTTAVIA. My mother tucked up her dress and shift on the side where the privy place lay; she presented to Teodoro her pretty, shining and snow-white belly; she bared the Venereal plain clad, as I have said, with thick, crisped and delightful moss. He seized by the way a few hairs,

set them all together, and, with a violent pluck, tore them out.

TULLIA. O what a funny performance, a performance preparing the way for a more refined one!

OTTAVIA. She gnashed her teeth out of pain, without however uttering a word of complaint.

TULLIA. Well, finish this story.

OTTAVIA. I was flogged, torn with lashes, nor did there escape from my mouth a word, or from my breast a plain to reproach me with my cowardice. After that we went home. Ah! ah! ah! We were now drawing nigh the threshold, when my mother said to me : « How art thou, daughter? » — « I am suffering, mother, » I replied. — « In a » moment I shall so contrive that a delicious flood » of voluptuousness will succeed the pain. I, too, » feel my buttocks and thighs as it pismires were » running over them; dost thou not likewise ex- » perience something like a burning tetter-itching? » — « Exactly, » said I, « there are countless itchy » twitchings under my skin; they resemble rather » a blunt prurient distemper than stings,. I am » quite on fire with them. » — « All these ailments, » let them be whatever they may, » said she, « will » be soon turned into an inexhaustible source of » pleasure. » And she led me into my room. — « Throw thyself upon the bed, » said she, « feign

» some mental dejection or other which thou hast » not; I shall then send thee thy husband Cavi- » ceo; but I want thee to give me an account » afterwards of the sort of game carried on bet- » ween you. » She was not long gone out when Caviceo came to me. He hugged me, as I lay on the bed; he soothed me with loving kisses : by his touch he excited me to pleasure. — « I have » very just heard, » said he, « that thou art ill? » — « And very ill, » I replied, « for I am told thou » art angry with me. Now what fault or crime have » I committed? » — « Sure, my darling soul, » said he, « thou art clear of every species of offense against » me; thou hast been filling me until now with » the greatest transports of joy, and I have found » in thy embraces supreme happiness. May I be- » come a worthless thing if ever I complain of thee; » ay, of thee in whom my mentule has encountered » all the delights and enjoyments of love. » So saying, he led the mentule out of the breeches; he begged me to put my hand to it as it was growing angry; in a moment after he jumped into bed. Having removed his drawers and bared my belly as far up as the waist, he stretched himself over me; quickly he drove in the spear, and as soon I felt the first shock, a long heavy Venereal shower began to fall from my loins. May I expire, darling Tullia, if ever anything was more agreeable to my

senses than this! In a word, being spurred on by a constant titillation, I offered Venus three libations in this coition : a well of voluptuousness had sprung up in me for the operations of this supreme joy. But when Caviceo attained his mark, his rain had not quenched my thirst, it had but kindled a fresh one; and when he was preparing to dismount, my dying eyes intimated that I was still burning. He placed his hand on my garden : this touch, vain illusion of Venus! eased me.

TULLIA. Thou describest the thing admirably well, but without adding anything new to what I already know. Now, under the flogging influence there are conjured, from all parts of the body leading to our Venus, myriads of very subtil and sprightly spirits more easily inflamed than sky-rockets; they run of their own accord into our genital organs, our vulva and spermatic vases, provided they are adapted to them : hence arise the itching and lubricity of our inflamed Venus. Well! here is a fact thou mayest look on as a miracle. Our friend, the Duchess Leonora, so illustrious on account of her noble origin, so conspicuous for her beauty and so remarkable for the gifts of mind and body, owes her fecundity to these lashings. Her husband, the Duke, was mad in love with his young wife; yet she would not bear him a child, and this was breaking his heart.

So all the means that art or ingenuity devised were made use of; every part of her person was subjected to experiments : art and ingenuity were unsuccessful, nothing availed. At last, in conformity to the advice of an Arab, Leonora was scourged, as thou, by her mother's hand. She had until then received no pleasure from Venus; but exactly at that very moment, on the Duke's letting his catapult fly at her, she was extremely excited. In a few days after her loins were again stimulated by stripes and her buttocks and thighs set on fire for Venus; at this time she was very near fainting under her husband; out of sheer voluptuousness she melted away into a prodigious flood. In fine, at the end of a short time, by undergoing the same kind of incentive, it was with great pleasure she received her husband and the mettlesome blows of the stiff tail. She became big with child and bore it in her womb. But among our male acquaintances, I have also heard of the Marquis Alfonso whom the rods excite to the amorous fight; otherwise he would be sluggish and impotent. He gets his backside scourged with rods, and they do lay them unto him; in the meanwhile his wife lies on her back in bed for him; while they are flogging him, he erects, and the harder the stripes are, the more vehement is the tension. When he sees his weapons are in good working order, he rushes upon his wife,

shakes her frantically up and down and floods her with the celestial gifts of Venus; he takes all the pleasures that can be had from love.

OTTAVIA. But wert thou to have really made a trial of it thyself, I do not imagine what thy admiration would be!

TULLIA. Indeed I have never tried it; but I wish to try it and that on to-morrow night. Now I want thee to enjoy the embraces of my dear Lampridio, who, being detained these eight days in the country with Callias, is making holidays away from Venus. He sent me a letter stating that he would be here to-morrow, and that Callias wants me to come to him, for some business or other they are carrying on there and which they have not as yet been able to transact.

OTTAVIA. We shall see. But thou hast forgotten to tell me what my mother related to thee about Giulia's wedding, once she was deflowered.

TULLIA. Here it is, now. Thou knowest that the marriage was almost a clandestine one; thy father was absent; none of the relations was invited. The act was played behind the scene, as we read in the plays of ancient authors, out of the spectators' sight. Before Sempronia had conducted the bride to the nuptial bed, in order to undergo the bull, she filled her weak mind with malignant counsels. Thou canst easily understand what she

must have told her, what she must have bid her say or do and what the silly creature actually did say and do. Giocondo had gone up to Giulia's room; for it was there that the scene was to pass. Being spent by Sempronia, he consulted his virile weapons to see whether they were sufficiently animated for the fight. Sempronia at length arrived and delivered Giulia over to his arms. — « Now, » said she, « I wish to strip Giulia naked for you. » Giocondo. » With her own hands she undressed the little girl, leaving only her shift, which barely concealed her pudency from Giocondo's eyes. Then Sempronia retired : « I leave you to yourselves, » said she, « to do your own business. » She stepped into the next room, from which she had a splendid view of them; for the door was ajar as Giulia's. Immediately Giulia cast herself at Giocondo' knees, being of course taught to do so. — « I shall be » gentle with you, » said she, « and shall yield to » your pleasures while there is life in me. Should » I act otherwise, chastise the guilty one. » He kissed her on lifting her up. — « Now take off thy shift, » my darling soul, » said he. But when he saw how her face reddened at these words, he stripped her as she was blushing and frighted. As soon as the shift dropped down to her feet, he stretched her supinely on the side of the bed; there he kneaded with his hands her hard, round, white little twin

paps, and assailed them with kisses; he next surveyed her bosom, belly and thighs, on finally fixing his thought and gaze upon Venus's garden. When the simple little girl felt him handling, pressing, separating the lips of, and putting his finger into, that spot, she shouted : — « Eh! eh! eh! » on interlarding her cry with complaints and sighs. — « Now, » said Giocondo, while pointing at the bed, « take up thy place in this fi ld for our duel. O » what lovely members! how they are setting me on fire with longing! » She obeyed and got into bed. At this sight, the wantom tail began to catch fire and swell out; Giocondo therefore laid himself at the little girl's side : in the twinkling of an eye Giulia slipped a pillow under her buttocks, without any one's telling her; she spread out her thighs as wide as possible, and, what will make thee laugh, she took her husband by the tool. He broke into laughter. — « What is the meaning » of this new image of Venus? » he asked. « Come! » and he had no sooner said this than he cast himself prone between the little girl's thighs; she held onto the key and directed in person the course of the rushing mentule; she stuck by herself the pike into her cleft; she then raised her legs higher, so as to make her heels kiss her buttocks. That is the position she put herself into for Venus. But when he felt the crown of his mentule's head sunk

in between the lips : — « Take away thy hand » now, » said Giocondo; « I will do the rest myself. » Giulia immediately set her two hands upon the rider's hips, and held a firm grip of them. Giocondo, whose mentule was bursting from tension, thrusted the spear with all his might into the farthest regions, on forcibly clearing himself a road until then blocked up against every pleasure. She screamed, without changing her posture, and at the third or fourth drive the glowing and fortunate mentule introduced itself into the most hidden sanctuary of Venus.

OTTAVIA. Did Giocondo perceive that the virginal flower was still blooming in the maiden? Did he feel that she was undefiled by any male intercourse?

TULLIA. He found her whole, as men usually do, when, during the first assaults, they have entire confidence in maidens with respect to their virginity.

OTTAVIA. I was afraid that she, who had known how to put herself into such convenient positions, had merely imposed upon him.

TULLIA. Giocondo easily understood that she had received this training from Sempronia; and when, by this first intercourse, he had made a wife of Giulia : « Who on earth, darling Giulia, » said he, « would have deemed thee so learned?

» Surely thou didst lead me to admire thy address, » when thou didst level against thyself my wea- » pons, with which thou wert to put an end to thy » own pudency; when thou didst hug me; when » thou didst set thy buttocks into such rapid mo- » tion in keeping time with thy swaying and nim- » ble loins; when thou didst manifest thy pleasure » through heart-fetched sighs and consuming ha! » ha! » But she remained mute. « Come, come, » said Giocondo, « tell me what thou art concealing » from me under the cloak of silence. » — « I dare » not, » replied Giulia; « I simply heard that this » is the way chaste girls, such as I am, ought to go » about, and usually do go about, those perfor- » mances. » — « Now who told thee, » said Gio- condo, « that this it the way women generally go » about them? » — « Do not force me to tell thee, » replied Giulia. — « Yes, I want thee to disclose it to me, » said he; « otherwise I shall not consider thee » so chaste as thou pretendest to be. » — « Well, I » beg thee never to make another the wiser of what » thou wishest me to disclose to thee, » said Giulia. « Sempronia taught me that it was my office and » bouden duty to show myself to thee such as I » have done; she made me swear I would do so. » — « It is well, » replied Giocondo. « But take care » not to let it be known that thou hast revealed » to me this secret. » Meanwhile, Sempronia heard

and saw everything, without either of them being aware of her presence.

OTTAVIA. For what purpose did she take advantage of the little girl's credulity, in order to fill her head with such evil counsels?

TULLIA. Because she expected that the little girl's morals, inasmusch as they were over wanton, would thereby awaken Giocondo's suspicion. However, up to the present she has not mentioned a single word about them either to him or her.

OTTAVIA. But thou hast not ended the story which thou didst begin.

TULLIA. When the hard stout mentule had quite stopped up the young woman's vulva, it being driven home to the little balls : « Thou art racking » me, » roared Giulia, « pity! pity! » Thereupon he loaded her with a shower of thrusts; while he was applying the digs more and more vehemently : « Oh! oh! » cried Giulia, « I am dying of pleasure. » Continue! continue! push, drive harder, bury thy » tool deeper! »

OTTAVIA. Ah! ah! ah!

TULLIA. In fact Sempronia had given her the following counsel : « Giulia, as soon as thou feelest » thyself touched by any titillation in that spot » make it appear that thou art taking far greater » pleasure than thou really wilt take. Excite thy » husband with exhortations, kisses, sighs and

» bounces. Otherwise he will be led to believe » that thou art dull and as senseless as a stone; » may the love I bear thee preserve thee from » such shame. » Therefore at the very first titillation the chaste young woman, in whose spot a considerable quantity of genital seed was burning, began to wag her buttocks, and, with the most lusty efforts she was capable of, to shake Giocondo whom she impregnated with an incredible voluptuousness. Nor was Giulia's delight inferior to his; for, after long and fervent agitations, she at length felt herself melting away into the Venereal flux. « Eh! eh! eh! » she exclaimed; « what is this? » What do I feel? I am fainting. » Having uttered these words, she grew silent, moaning and shaking all over, as if her reason was gone. Giocondo put his hand to her vulva as she lay languishing, and, pulling back his member so as to leave only its head inside, he found it dripping with the liquid secretion of Venus, nor had he as yet vomited his libidinous venom into the windings of Giulia's vulva. Then he drove in the spear; he fluttered and squeezed, yet she did not stir; so he paused awhile. — « Now what is the meaning of this stu- » por of thine, Giulia? » said he, while attacking her rosy lips with smacks. — « I am dying in good » earnest, » she replied; « thou hast filled me with » so much pleasure that I think it is impossible

» to add anything more, ay, be it ever so little, to » the over-measure of my felicity. » He recommenced concussions. « I am no longer myself, » she murmured; « how these confrictions transport » me beyond the clouds! » And at length she began anew to put herself into commotion, to shake her buttocks, to bounce until she felt herself drenched within by a warm shower. « Ah! ah! ah! » she exclaimed; « what is this again? » Giocondo, with a hand planted on each cheek of her backside, drew the young woman up to himself; presently, she raised her uterus and loins as high as she could; in the meantime Giocondo's fiery tube was distilling its liquor into her conch. Nay more, she became so infatuated that, when the prolific humour was falling drop by drop, she seized the virile weapon, pressed and milked it, lest any portion of so sweet a gift go to loss on her; on softly squeezing Giocondo's testicles, as if it were to animate the member, she carefully blew its nose, so that not a single drop fell from it when taken out of the vagina.

OTTAVIA. The tender young woman's limbs were not broken by so long a struggle? I dare say love and its attendant, voluptuousness, supplied her with strength.

TULLIA. Until morning, Giulia enjoyed only one assault; but it was worth at least two or three.

The other, after her own statement, infused a much weaker sense of pleasure into her veins : for, at the end of the sixth or seventh thrust, the sluice broke open and the Venereal jet rushed from out Giocondo's loins, just as Giulias was beginning to feel a rising titillation, without her being able to attain the term of enjoyment.

OTTAVIA. Giocondo had moreover on the following night, as thou toldst me, free access to her embraces on two occasions?

TULLIA. But he had to earn it by previously paying a tribute to thy blessed mother's vulva; she therefore enjoyed the full vigour of her husband only twice during the second month.

OTTAVIA. In fact, once thy mother has squeezed out of him the venereal sap, by previous embraces what remains would appear to one to be mere dregs and mud.

TULLIA. A month after the marriage, while Giocondo was jesting with Sempronia : « Dost » thou want me to become a father, Madam? » he asked her. — « Yes, » she answered. — « But how » can I, » he added, « unless thou givest me leave » to fill Giulia's field with warm and fruitful seed? » Allow me to take her in hand three times, and » to roll the unbroken billows of my passion into » her womb. The poor creature has, I understand,

» borne with quite enough of hardship : for, I know » how badly thy aunt Teresia treated her, though » innocent, because thou didst fancy she was more » wanton than she is. » — « I will permit thee, » replied Sempronia, « but on condition however that » she become pregnant; I wish thee, when melting » in the arms of thy Dione, to pour into her three » times on the same night whatever seed may » accumulate in thy loins for the next seven days. » Therefore, on that night week; Giocondo, having opened the girdle of chastity and removed the portcullis from before the young woman's entrance, liberally watered her garden with fertilizing rain. So Sempronia is of opinion that Giulia is with child ever since then : for she shows certain signs of impregnation by her taste and qualm.

OTTAVIA. May I die if I cease to heartily detest Teresia, for the scandalous torture she inflicted on so good and so candid a girl!

TULLIA. May I die likewise if ever I cease to reproach thy mother with that cruelty! She had no sooner got in into her head that the young woman was wasting herself away with lust and longing, than she ran off to Teresia. She stated that she feared for Giulia's chastity, as she noticed her becoming less modest; that some very hard remedy was needed to maintain her henceforth in the duties of a good *mater familias;* that she should

be warned against the ardour and temptations of youth. Teresia begged to have her sent to her, so she was sent to her; but the girdle of chastity was previously taken off her and given to Sempronia to keep. Teresia cheerfully received her former pupil; she gave a letter for Giocondo, begging him to leave her Giulia for three days : she stated that she wished to enjoy to satiety the presence of the young woman whom she brought up, whom she educated and of whom she was deprived so long. After long chatting, she asked Giulia whether she would be willing to prove to her that she was virtuous, truly virtuous, Giulia said she would. « Then, » replied Teresia, « thou wilt macerate thy » body by fasting these three days, and thou wilt let » thyself be lashed by me. » — « I will do whatever » you please, » answered Giulia; « I shall consider » whatever you impose upon me as a part of my » duty. » Therefore she was whipped on the first day, but very lightly; on the second, very hard; on the third, not quite so hard; being thus corrected, she was sent home at sun-set. Sempronia was absent, but Giocondo was at home, and as soon as he saw his pretty wife coming, he fled to her arms. — « I am returning, » said she, on smiling, « as it becomes a chaste woman who is very fond » of thee. » After a short conversation he led her into his room; there she related to him every-

thing that had happened to her, Giocondo deplored her sad destiny; he consoled her; he promised to watch over her more carefully in future, that she should not have to undergo any more corrections or troubles. Then he kissed her, and, slipping his hand under her petticoats he was glad to find that her pudency was not barred from his desires by the girdle of chastity. He laid her upon her back in bed, and, by means of three complete coitions, he effaced from her mind the remembrance of the thee cruel days and of the long suffering.

OTTAVIA. My mother did not know this? She was not angry with Giocondo?

TULLIA. She knew nothing of it; she had not even the slightest suspicion of it. For, a little before she returned, Giocondo slipped away from the place; when he came back shortly after, he saluted his wife as if he had not seen her those three days.

OTTAVIA. He did not leave my mother of course without saluting her?

TULLIA. She told Giulia that Giocondo had something to communicate to her, concerning the execution of an affair which she had just intrusted to him. Both walked out and went into Vittorio's room : Giulia was ordered to wait until her husband would come back. — « Dost thou think, » said Giocondo, « that I would prefer Giulia's em- » braces to thine? I wish to pour into thee what-

» ever lubricity is in me. » He kissed her; he handled her, and he erected; she pulled up her petticoat and shift, as usual; she hugged him as he stood before her, brandishing his tool, and, letting herself fall upon the bed, she wantonly provoked him to the fight. In short, the deed was done : then Giocondo returned with Sempronia to his wife Giulia was sitting on the bed, and Giocondo addressed her thus : — « Giulia, I wish our mistress » to know the sort of person thou art, how chaste » and virtuous thou art. I wish, moreover, thou » wert to put on this girdle of chastity from her » hands; thou wilt have a favourable witness for » thee and me of thy pudency. » Sempronia praised Giulia for her virtue and her readiness in submitting to this. So Giulia's funny part was clapped into prison. As to thine, Ottavia, I shall soon find out to-night whether it is as well adapted to all the sports known to Venus, as thou resemblest Venus in shape and beauty.

OTTAVIA. I shall behave, I hope, in such a manner that thou wilt have no further doubts about me, and Lampridio will, to his great pleasure, perceive that I am a fountain of the sweetest delight.

SIXTH DIALOGUE

FROLICS AND SPORTS

Ottavia, Tullia, Lampridio, Rangoni

OTTAVIA. With that incentive argument of thine, thou hast persuaded my inmost senses of how sweet to-night's pleasures are about to be.

TULLIA. Indeed, thou wilt feel twice greater ones than I could promise thy inordinate desire, promise what I might.

OTTAVIA. Of course Lampridio will come with Rangoni, and both will open battery upon us?

TULLIA. Ay, both will join battle with thyself.

OTTAVIA. Out! Such bold riders as they are would founder my charger in a few hours.

TULLIA. Get thee gone, thou silly creature. Thou wilt be quite a match for them by thyself! and, after having measured arms with them, thou

wilt confess that even Heroines are as naught beside thee.

OTTAVIA. No, cousin, I shall not. Dost thou believe me such a wanton? Should I be swimming all night in pleasures? Should I be glutted on the food of the Goddesses? Wouldst thou take no part in the enjoyment? Go to, go to, I shall not.

TULLIA. Howsoever the thing may be, thou shalt undergo it; thou shalt, thou shalt. Look here : « Thou must try and put thyself forward for the gaining of Venus's whole fortune. » See to it.

OTTAVIA. Oh! oh! thou hast secured thy entrance by this loathsome girdle of chastity? What dost thou expect will become of me, unless thou lendest a helping hand? Since thou wishest me so well, I shall be ill.

TULLIA. Cheer up! I spent four of them, and thou art afraid of two?

OTTAVIA. Yes, but these two fellows are remarkably lusty, and they abound in an unfailing stream of lubricity. Thou sayest that Lampridio usually runs twelve miles in thy stade. What thou statest of Rangoni is almost prodigious. Cotytto (1) single-handed would be no match for the two.

TULLIA. Lampridio related certain things about

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(1) A Thracian strumpet, made a goddess of unchastity, whose priests were called Baptæ.

Rangoni, surpassing all belief of connoisseurs. Thou knowest they are very intimate.

OTTAVIA. What did he relate? Did he also contend with thee?

TULLIA. When he had come here to our city three days ago to day, Lampridio, with Callias' consent, brought him on a visit to us. See what his good nature is like : first, he sets his heart on fire for me; then he consoles him, raving under the influence of a violent desire, by repeated promises. He tells him that he will soon get him to partake of the supreme felicity, so he styles it, which he himself enjoys. He bids him be of good hope. He disposes of my love without consulting me.

OTTAVIA. And thou wast not a little angry?

TULLIA. Just fancy. I got into a passion, and gave full went to my wrath. But he, in order to soothe my anger, said : — « My Lady, my Queen, » my Goddess, excuse my complaisance. I know » it will not be thy fault that I keep my word. » Rangoni saw thee, and he is mad in thy love. I » had seen his cousin at Naples, and I was crazy » after her. He feigned to be smitten by her, in » order to countenance my flame. He had an inter- » view with her : he introduced me into the young » lady's bedroom : at night I enjoyed the desired » Venus, whilst Laura (this was her name) imagin-

» ed she was yielding to the embraces of Rangoni. » Was I not to be mindful of so great a favour? » Excuse me, my Queen; in requiring the obligation, » I have unwilfully offended thee. »

OTTAVIA. What didst thou reply to this?

TULLIA. The voice of my lover softened my heart's hardness. — « What shall I do? » I replied. « Art thou not ashamed to have me cast headlong » into such disgrace, me who am wholly thine? » — « Well, » said he, « yield only to this sole fault; » let thyself be moved by Rangoni's love and the » prayers of thy own Lampridio. Fear nothing » from me for the future, nothing will become of » it but what is pleasing and decent. » I consented, but : — « Lampridio, » said I, « dost thou know » Ottavia? »

OTTAVIA. That is enough to make me angry with thee, as thou with Lampridio.

TULLIA. Peace, thou dull fool. I disclosed to him my intention, namely, of placing thee in his arms. « How I should rejoice thee! » I said. — « But, » meanwhile, Rangoni and I, » he replied, « can » not hold out. If thou wilt defer this enjoyment » to the night, we shall be each of us dissolved at » the sight of this beauty here, which is setting us » on fire. Grant each at least one felicity. » — « What honour will it reflect on thy name, » I retorted, « when thou shalt have stained me by an

» alien intercourse! Use thy right withal. » At length, I let myself be moved on this condition, viz., that I should open my stade and Cupid's lists to Rangoni for one round, and that it should end there. That I should wish each of them to go entire and not drained to thy trench.

OTTAVIA. They come entire from thy embraces?

TULLIA. This scene was acted in our gardens, into which there was no view save from my chamber; in fact, every opening was closed up and secured. While awaiting the success his friend would have, Rangoni kept pacing about hardby and staring at me from time to time with glowing eyes. Then Lampridio said to him : — « Return Tullia everlasting thanks for the heavenly gift, » and come to enjoy the sovereign good. » I am so constituted by nature, that I am wholly a stranger to every species of pertness. When he had drawn nigh me, I blushed : so he gave me a kiss. He threw the fault on his boldness, and apologized. While he was excusing himself, we had already entered that grot formed at the angle of the garden for the sake of coolness, Lampridio was with us. — « There is one thing I wish thee to know, » Lady, » Lampridio said to me, « and it is thy inte- » rest it should be known, Rangoni. » — « Well, » what is it? » inquired Rangoni. — « Tullia herself

» will soon inform thee of it, » replied Lampridio, « with her sighs, kisses and the mad movements of » her nimble loins. » — « May Venus rather destroy » thee, » I shouted, « thou conceited merry-maker! » He leads me out of the grot by the hand. — « Excuse » me, Rangoni, » says he, « I shall directly give her » back to thee as pure as she is now. I do not wish » her to go out of thy sight, she who is the light » of thy eyes and mine. Only two words. » Then turning to me : — « Thou dost not know, Tullia, » the sort of rider thou art about to have. The » girls of Rome and Venice, with whom he had to » do, acknowledged that no mortal ever watered » the female furrows with such an abundant sup- » ply of rain as Rangoni. Geronimo Mercuriali, » after having carefully inquired into all that was » said about him, stated that it was not only amaz- » ing, but miraculous. »

OTTAVIA. In the meanwhile, what became of Rangoni with his inspired fury, rage and mentule?... Ho, ho! I hear a noise. They are coming. How greatly afraid I am! how ashamed I feel!

TULLIA.

O Hymen, O Hymenæus! Come, Hymen, O Hymenæus!

Here is Lampridio. But why art thou alone, Lampridio? What has become of thy friend?

LAMPRIDIO. We have supped with Mendoza, the prefect of the town, a hearty and jovial fellow. He has detained Rangoni by asking him a lot of questions about his business, parents and relations, and, as he is a man of ready wit, he interlards his discourse with some pleasant jests. Being maddened by the violence of the love fit which seized upon me while I was thinking of you, I came away alone : now let Ottavia heal me of it, if she wishes to have me cured and hers. Why art thou silent, Ottavia?

OTTAVIA. Dear Tullia, my conscience, overcast with shame, deprives me of all effrontery and the use of speech.

LAMPRIDIO. You even refuse me a kiss? Ah me!

TULLIA. Come, Ottavia, why dost thou run back? This bed will be a tight fit for us four, when Rangoni comes : besides, nobody will have room in it, not even shame. Set aside such silliness, thou fool.

OTTAVIA. Why art thou, thou fool, exposing me naked to Lampridio's eyes by removing the clothes?

LAMPRIDIO. How comely she is! what delicate limbs!

TULLIA. I wish thee, Ottavia, to consider me as if I were thyself. Lampridio is impatient; wilt thou pity the poor fellow?

LAMPRIDIO. Befriend me, Tullia; exert thyself

so that Ottavia may consent to her being loved and to my gathering the flower of her beauty and youth. O shape of Venus!

OTTAVIA. Away, away : I am going to bawl, if you essay any farther.

TULLIA. By what evil spirits art thou possessed? Art thou in thy right mind? Now, by the Goddess Pertunda! if thou wilt not have Lampridio as a friend, thou shalt have me for an enemy.

OTTAVIA. Meanwhile, this same Lampridio of thine is defiling with his lewd hand my paps, bosom and the other parts of my person.

LAMPRIDIO. How nicely Venus' conch gapes with you! how commodiously the funny spot stands out! with what soft moss it is covered!

OTTAVIA. Ho, sirrah! what are you doing? You have me now altogether in your power. Shameless woman, what shall I do after this scandal?

TULLIA. Lampridio, embrace Ottavia; and thou Ottavia, embrace Lampridio. I shall play my little part in this comedy : with my hand I shall aim the male weapon at the female butt. It is well : the whole thing is buried within. How the privy parts of the one are admirably adapted to those of the other! Now, do not spare thy companion, Lampridio.

OTTAVIA. What are you on for? How you do squeeze me! how you shake me! how you thump

me! Take away thy hand, Tullia; why art thou tickling me? Oh! oh! oh!

TULLIA. Raise thy buttock. Raise it, I say, raise it higher. Shake it quicker, harder, more fiercely. Bravo! bravo!

LAMPRIDIO. If thou rejoicest in being transpierced, Ottavia, give me a kiss.

OTTAVIA. I do rejoice!... I do rejoice!... I am dying! Ah! ah! Am I satisfying thy pleasure, which forms my chief delight? Shall I put myself into a more violent motion? I shall do my best.

TULLIA. Do so then, and no prating. Wonderfully well! What limber and nimble reins thou hast! Meanwhile, I shall handle the prurient pellets for thee, Lampridio; I shall excite them by gentle touches to discharge their duty in bringing on the melting crisis.

LAMPRIDIO. How happy you both make me! how you feed my voluptuousness, thou Tullia, with thy nectar! and thou, Ottavia, with thy ambrosia! Lo! lo! Now, now, Ottavia, lift, lift thy reins. Sturdily, sturdily!

TULLIA. Thou art fainting, Ottavia, thou art fainting?

OTTAVIA. I feel!... I feel!... How scalding this piss is! how impetuously it is shot off! Kiss me, kiss me. And now I, too, am melting... The veins of my Venus are distilling. Oh! oh! I feel the

effect of Jupiter's copulation with Juno. This pleasure comes from heaven. Oh! oh! the bottom!... I am fainting!... the bottom!... I am fainting.

TULLIA. What art thou prating about with thy stammering? Has Lampridio's anchor touched the bed of thy river?

OTTAVIA. I thought so. But Lampridio is now swooning; he is going off, he is weighing anchor. Let me however kiss thee again and again, Lampridio; may I devour thee with my kisses before thou alightest from my racer!

TULLIA. Perhaps thou wantest, thou lascivious thing, to incite a lifeless and worn out nerve to a fresh fight? It shall not be so. Go back to Rangoni, lest he may suspect thee, as well as us, of our remaining but little chaste.

LAMPRIDIO. I shall return to my friend, as thou advisest me. I shall pretend I spent this short time with the prefect's cousin Federico.

TULLIA. But how has Ottavia treated thee? How has she seemed fitted for the pleasure?

LAMPRIDIO. Indeed, I have found nothing in her but what may be also found in thee, dear Tullia; the whole thing has a smack of the true and unmixed venery. We shall speak of this hereafter. Good-bye.

OTTAVIA. Well, what thanks shall I return thee,

Tullia! Now I know what Venus is like, he filled me with so much lust. The length of his rammer especially tickled me, for it is far inferior to Caviceo's helm in point of thickness. I have really tasted all the goods of Venus.

TULLIA. I am very glad that thou hast recognised the truth of what I used to say about Lampridio.

OTTAVIA. Didst thou notice how joyfully he jumped out of bed, when he gave me a kiss and gently tapped me on the bottom? Happy woman thou art, to have it in thy power to sport in his arms whenever thou pleasest! But did not Rangoni also fill thee with strange delights?

TULLIA. I return therefore to the story I had begun; besides thy seeming anxious to hear it, I am also highly pleased with it.

OTTAVIA. Thou wilt thereby treat me to the more agreable portion of thy delights.

TULLIA. As man is the most seedy of all animals, so Rangoni is the most seedy of all men. « I advise » thee, » Lampridio used to say, « to put thyself » into a good position, so that nothing may go to » waste on thee. For my chief pleasure is to see thee » washed from head to foot. » Thereupon he walked away.

OTTAVIA. What next?

TULLIA. Rangoni came running at full speed to

me. « Nothing will shield thee, » he cried, « from » my desires. » He forcibly grasps me; he drags me whether I will or not to the corner where thou knowest there is a bed. He places one hand on my bosom; with the other he bares the abode of Venus by rolling up my dress to my waist. He soon unbuttons his breeches, leaving his testicles a free scope.

OTTAVIA. As soon as he was in battle-array, thou sawst a huge stiff trident worthy of the Hero and thyself?

TULLIA. It is almost like Lampridio's, so that, as far as I could see, there is no difference in them. It is eleven or twelve inches long in a state of erection. — « I am just going to melt, » said he, « suit thy » love to mine, Madam. » By this time I let myself gradually and thoughtlessly drop upon the bed. He stretched himself over me, I being upon my back; he began first, by the slight friction of his nails, to kindle some sparks in my groin, and then in that interstice, which I told thee is called the perineum, where the firebrands of the venereal prurience are more ardent. — « Come, come, » said I, « have done; you are flouting me. Why do » you tease me, who am already on fire with your » love? » — « Receive therefore, » said he, « this » love of mine whatever it is, » and he instantly drove the dart into the artery of desire. When I felt it :

— « You are hurting me, » I exclaimed, « you are hurting me, you naughty man. » Lampridio heard me, and came running : — « Take care, Tullia, » said he, « that nobody may hear thy voice from the » neighbouring street at the other side of this wall. » What honest man does not know it? Curb thy voice, » but not thy reins. »

OTTAVIA. He saw you struggling in that palæstra, and he was able to bridle his laughter and the rage which Venus in her nakedness excites?

TULLIA. Ay, he saw us, and as he beheld my left foot leaning upon the ground : — « I will do each of you, » he added, « a friendly turn. » So he put a stool under it. Owing to this contrivance, the already harboured mentule worked its way farther in. Smiling he gave Rangoni a blow on the cheeks of his backside with his open hand, and left the grot.

OTTAVIA. Ah! ah! a funny picture, truly; thyself and Rangoni were very laughable!

TULLIA. For a little while, Rangoni remained motionless. — « Hug me, my queen, » he cried; for his inactive limbs were growing faint; I do hug him. « I have not been with a woman these three » months, » he added; « no girl has relieved my » humour's impatience by a sweet effusion. Now, » know that thou wouldst scarcely find any one

» to water thy garden with such an abundant supply » of fertilizing rain as I. »

OTTAVIA. Once the spur was driven in, was each of you able to maintain the race?

TULLIA. He began to thrust more fiercely, and, at the sixth or seventh shock, he washed me inwardly with a hot shower of rain. The violence of the jet shot out by the member caused me such itching in those parts, that I could not refrain from making hasty movements.

OTTAVIA. Thou didst so, that Rangoni might not think thou wast of stone, by thy remaining senseless, cold and dull, thou whom Lampridio styles marmorean from thy whiteness.

TULLIA. — « I behold the heavens, » cried I, out of my wits, « I behold the heavens open; » and forthwith, on giving the fountain a free course, I let go the seed. He perceived that I was liquefying : so, stirring himself up, he came to my assistance with eager thrusting. One seed mixed with the other, for he, too, dissolved. While he, with his unbroken jet of scalding humour, kept raising all the pruriencies throughout my reins in a general riot, I melted away four times into a copious tide. The struggle came to an end at last. This I do confess, Ottavia : never before did such a quantity of falling lubricity quench in a single copulation the ardours of my genital ground.

OTTAVIA. Did he satiate with voluptuousness? Had a fresh champion presented himself after him, wouldst thou have refused him battle? And Lampridio did not do it to thee?

TULLIA. Indeed, a new enjoyment would have given me more pain than joy. For my womb, being filled to overflowing by the superabundant seed it had imbibed, neither sought after, nor offered any further pleasure.

OTTAVIA. They say that every animal is sad after coition.

TULLIA. Nay, Rangoni expressed, by his cheerful countenance and pleasant jokes, how greatly rejoiced he felt for his having freely enjoyed my goods. He calls Lampridio; so I free myself from his arms, and escape from both, lest I should be again compelled one way or another to undergo Venus for the sake of gratifying Lampridio. I got into the house in the greatest haste, almost before they missed me. Well, Ottavia, I did not feel a single drop of the venereal matter, poured out of Rangoni's spout into my conch, run away. What means this, I know not. But if I thought I was put in the family-way on that occasion, I would be grieved to the core, as I am very fond of my dear Callias.

OTTAVIA. Well now, what is such a trifle compared with thy quartumvirate?

TULLIA. I understand. Thou wishest me to relate my campaign in Rome?

OTTAVIA. Exactly.

TULLIA. While Callias was at Rome, on the formal plea of determining a very complicated law suit with my cousin Ottoboni, he caught a disease which the Doctors at first considered would be lingering and deadly. This event summoned me to Rome; and if Callias at length recovered his health, he is indebted for it to my careful and loving assistance, a fact which he does not deny. As soon as he began to grow strong and was quite out of danger, the humour took me to cheer up my spirits a little after the three long months I spent buried in sorrow. There used to come to the house, from the nearest dwelling, a middle aged woman of the Orsini family. A very close friendship sprung up between us; she often slept with me, the sole consolation for a troubled mind. One night as we were talking and jesting, I confess that my thoughts were wandering now and then to the sport of my discontinued love making. As she was questioning me thereupon : — « If I once commenced to » feel, » said I, « those fires rekindling in my veins, » all the virtue, constancy and modesty in the » world would not be able to extinguish them. » To this the matron, a perfect mistress of the fashionable and ladylike expressions, if ever there

was one, replied : — « To-morrow I will have thee » glutted to loathing on the gifts of the renounced » Venus; and, unless thou art a fool, thou wilt » consent to it. Neither thy reputation nor honour » will be in any way diminished thereby. The only » thing I require of thee, is to put thyself wholly » at my disposal. » — « I do, » said I. « What have » I to fear, having thee as surety? I follow thee as » my leader and guide. » When it was morning, she bids me take a slight breakfast, and not indulge too far. She herself washes my chest, breasts, belly, thighs and bottom with sweet smelling waters, and Venus's mould with myrtle oil. She puts a white gown of silk gauze upon me. I imagined I was rather standing in the shade of some transparent cloud, than covered with a robe. We are next conveyed in a coach to a suburban villa, situated in the midst of delightful gardens. There, both Flora and Venus revel and frolic free and blithesome the whole year round, each season forming but an eternal spring. After having entered a most gorgeous parlour, she introduces me into a private chamber, where an obscure light, a sort of perpetual twilight, favours modesty and immodesty at the same time.

OTTAVIA. A fit home for mirthful lasciviousness.

TULLIA. A sober looking and simply dressed duenna comes to meet us. — « I shall manage

» matters so, » said she, on turning to Dame Orsini, « that this little wench of yours will be very » thankful to you, for the pleasures she will be » intoxicated with in a few hours. » So saying, she takes me by the hand. Presently, Dame Orsini goes away, and, the door being shut, the old one leads me quite perplexed to the inside of the house. « First, daughter, » says she, « you must » abide by whatever is in store for you, by what- » ever you are called on to endure. You are no » longer your own mistress; you are at the com- » mand of the four champions whom I have here » ready to enter the tilting lists with you. One » of them is a Frenchman, another a German and » the other two are natives of Florence. My mistress » likes Florentines. They are all well known to us » this year; they are very intimate with one ano- » ther, and, what is better, they are of noble ori- » gin. » — « Tut! » said I, « so many wrestlers will » kill me. Have pity on me, mother. One will do; » let it be a duel and not a battle; send away the » others. » She laughed, and, while I was speaking, they all presented themselves. — « Choose, » the old hag says, « the one you will take first; now let » yourself assign to each his turn for the fight : » for they will come to the fight and your arms, » according to your arrangement. » I hold out my hand to the Frenchman, he was surnamed de La

Tour. I desire Aloisio to take his turn after him, Conrad after Aloisio, Fabrizio after Conrad. Aloisio and Fabrizio were both Florentines; Conrad was a German. Then the duenna sounded the trumpet. — « O youths, » she exclaims, « teach » so handsome, so tender a young girl the kind » of use skilful folks as you know how to make » of a woman's body. He that behaves the most » valiantly in Venus's list, and is the best at wielding his javelin, will carry off this ring as the reward of his valour and the prize of his victory. » She showed them a gold ring with a sparkling diamond set in it, the present of Dame Orsini, that they might rush the more eagerly to the strife. « Count » one another's heats » she added; « as for me, I shall » see that there be no miscounting. So, go now and look at your work. » Having uttered these words, she walked out of the room.

OTTAVIA. Wast thou not afraid, seeing thyself in the midst of four couched spears?

TULLIA. Thou shalt hear. La Tour kisses my hand, and at the same time leads me straightway to a corner of the room closed in by a curtain. Inside, there stood a bed scarcely a foot high, and a lamp which shed a sort of glimmering light, as if it were already conscious of our lubricity. Then Fabrizio raises his voice. — « Ho, there! my good » fellow, » he cries, « make haste with thy part of

» the business, for we are likewise melting. We do » not grudge thee the first go, but look alive. » — « There shall be no cheating, » replies La Tour, « what gives so much pleasure in the doing, be not » afraid of its being quickly done. » Being overcome by that excessive bashfulness which is inherent to me and no mere put on, I was no longer mistress of myself. He asks me to be so kind as to place myself on the bed; I do not listen to him; Having one hand already under my petticoats, with a gentle push he tosses me over almost in spite of me. Hearing me drop rather violently, the others burst out into a loud laugh, while I fetch a deep sigh. « What is the meaning of this? » said I. « So » help me Hercules, what kind of person will you » think I am, I who have hitherto lived a pure, » chaste and spotless life? what kind of person » will you really think I am? » — « Rid yourself of » such childish bashfulness, » replies La Tour. « You » are not the first to be brought into our embra- » ces : several very handsome aristocratic ladies » have shared in our furies, as you shall do. We » have found a means of respecting the brothel » and of honouring lust. Nobody would make you » a crime of what nobody will know, and what » you will say to yourself comes nearest to virtue, » while we lecherous, though honest fellows, are » executing and consummating it. » — « Ah, make

» haste, La Tour! » exclaimed Fabrizio; « thou » art killing us with thy loquacity. » — « I comply, » he answers, and instantly letting down his breeches, he takes out the mentule and stretches himself over me; he thrusts it into the gaping conch; he drives it home with ardent compressure; he makes most violent shocks. And as I was not stirring : — « Now at least, Madam, that I am near finishing, » said he, « favour my love. » I do favour it with a slight waving movement, and shortly after I feel the inner field of pleasure besprinkled with rain from the chafing mentule. There was, consequently, no further room for bashfulness, no further thought of virtue; nay, no further recollection of myself; I too fell into a liquid state. But he had already reached the goal; so I did not quite finish under him. Conrad, a good sort of fellow, though somewhat rude, comes running to me. — « Since I am « acting with your leave, Madam, » said he, « I » shall keep form idle talking, I shall discourse » with you in good earnest. » Without any more ado, the sinewy fellow drives the thick stiff pike into my guts, and at the fourth or fifth concussion he compels me, by his scalding seed, to send forth from my reins a freh flood of venereal matter. — « Why have you come out of your turn, Conrad, » said I, « and taken the place assigned to Aloisio? » — « We arranged it like that, between us, » he

replies. « The two Florentines will come together to » you; they will also, I think, couple with you at the » same time : for they deem us fools, us French- » men and Germans, because we loathe to know » where true voluptuousness is situated. » Conrad goes out, and Aloisio and Fabrizio dart in. — « Legs up, » says Fabrizio, on threatening me with his dagger. I raise them; he then stretches himself upon my breast, and sinks the dagger in my incurable wound. Aloisio lifts up both of my tibias; and, slipping a hand under each ham, he shakes my reins without my using any efforts. A strange kind of ridiculous motion! I said I was burning : I had no sooner spoken, than the overflowing venereal slime put out the fire. Aloisio gets up; Fabrizio prepares himself for a new engagement. His mentule was waxing very red and awfully menacing. — « Pray, Madam, be so kind as to turn on your face, » said he.

OTTAVIA. I know what comes next.

TULLIA. I do turn as he desired, knowing that it would be a guide to me in arriving at my own pleasure through theirs. But when he beheld my buttocks, the whiteness of which would have caused ivory and snow to appear dim : « Oh! how fair » you are! » he cries. « Rise upon your knees on » lowering your bust. » Both roads leading to each Venus lay open : one honest and pure, the other

criminal and polluted. — « Which road wilt thou » take? » asks Aloisio. — « The one thou didst » take, » replies Fabrizio. « Afterwards, I shall see. »

OTTAVIA. So he added this by way of a threat.

TULLIA. He went the right way and delighted me; he thrusted the swift and fiery dart into the farthest regions of my womb; he seized each pap with a hand; he then set to fluttering; and in a moment he caused a delicious stream to flow into the soft hollow of Venus. And then I began to be ravished out of my senses by strange delights : a little more and I had fallen into a trance. That exuberance of seed squeezed out of Fabrizio's groins filled and tickled me, whilst that abundance forced out of my own wasted my strength. In this conjunction alone, I wasted more force than in the three preceding ones. So it ended there; and this was the first act of the play, which was composed of four scenes.

OTTAVIA. The idea I had framed of Fabrizio's requesting such a posture, as thou hast. mentioned, put me altogether out. As for the Florentines, they are in the habit of cozening Venus. It is said that they delight in having to do with young lads, and that they love those damsels who are willing to turn boys and supply the boyish part of the business.

TULLIA. I have good experience of it, and I shall

serve thee myself as an exemple of what they can do in such matters. Well now, there is no use in laying too much stress on every particular, La Tour and Conrad, each in his turn, on urging their horses to full speed entered my list. As Aloisio was advancing towards me, the old woman came unlooked for. She warns Aloisio and Fabrizio to be upon their guard that I may not have to complain of being defiled by an obscene copulation. Although it was lawful for them to stick the coulter into my body by whatever furrow they choose, yet it was not equally lawful to introduce their seed into it. Should they act otherwise, they would vex Dame Orsini and offend intentionally; this tribute of love should be paid only to the vulva. She also addressed her discourse to me, on exhorting me to take courage for assaults unknown to me. Then, they draw lots between them to see who will be the first to have the glory of digging the best bit of her: such is their expression. The licentiousness of a degrading pleasure exceeds, in the eyes of scurvy frouzy Sodomites, all the sweetness of true glory. « I shall not be sufficient for » it, » I shouted, « I desire a respite, not a very long » one. » They then proceeded along the straight way to the honest Venus. The coitions that took place in this manner amounted to eight. La Tour was very dear to me; I intended to make him a

present of the first fruits of a conjuction as yet unknown to me, and thus get myself deflowered in that quarter by the youth I loved.

OTTAVIA. Virginity is not situated in the same place for Florentines as for women, nor is it the same kind of virginity.

TULLIA. But La Tour replied to my offer that it was an affront and no gift, and he went so far as to rebuke me. — « Whom do you think I am, Ma» dam? » said he. « God forbid such madness should » enter my enjoyments, such infamy my thoughts, » such ignominy my intercourse with woman! I can » cherish no pleasure unless it be dear to you. I » beseech you not do deem me unworthy of one » favour. » — « Whatever you desire, be it what it » may, » I replied, « I grant it. But I beg you to » take it without asking for it. » — « Allow my eyes » to enjoy a full view of your divine beauty. » So I take off my clothes of my own free will, nor was it a hard job, for all I had on was a shift and a gown. With his own hand he lays the shift at my feet. On seeing me stark naked, he covers me with fond kisses; he wanders over all my members with rather free touches. He then thrusts into my womb the angry and massive tail; he unites his groins to mine. After him comes Conrad; Aloisio and Fabrizio succeed Conrad. A new style of warfare is entered upon. On beholding me naked, they begin

to leap for joy and applaud. After this, Aloisio places a bolster across the couch under my buttocks. — « Now turn flat upon your face and expose to our eyes and affections the darling breech. » — « Well, what would you have? » said I « Have » a regard for a woman in a fright. You forget I » am a girl and not a boy. » — « Pho! » replied Fabrizio; « what not a single one of the Roman girls, » out of so many of those conspicuous for their » accomplishments and beauty, has dared refuse, » a witty and handsome young lady like you dares » refuse? » — « But my spirit shudders at the idea » of such a thing, » I answered; « I could never » bear it; you would kill me unaccustomed to this » sort of warfare. » — « You could bear it, » added Aloisio. « Much younger girls become famous » among us men, owing to this corporeal inter- » course. The taking away of your fore-part vir- » ginity cost you more. » Seeing there was no help for me, I yielded to the raging mad fellows. Thereupon, Aloisio bends downwards over my buttocks; he applies the ram to my back-door; he batters it; he makes it totter : with a final effort he breaks it in. I groaned. He immediately plucked the tool out of the wound, buried it in the womb, and sent forth a heavy shower of seed into the lubric avenue of my matrix. The deed being done, Fabrizio goes through the same process. With

eager impetus he pushes his spear-staff, and in less than no time he buries the whole thing in my guts. He keeps a good while going and coming back by the same road; and, what I did not think was possible, such a fit of some sort of itching or other came over me, that I no longer doubted but I could accustom myself to this sort of thing, if I only wished. God forbid the like fully should ever mislead Callias! He did not, however, abuse beyond measure my submission to this outrage; he shed the most luscious delights throughout the secret senses of my womb, nor did the rascal's intemperance prevent me in the least from taking my pleasure.

OTTAVIA. Now tell me of Callias, please; did the naughty fellow ever gibe thee about that spot?

TULLIA. I guess he did, my dear Ottavia.

OTTAVIA. The same thing happened to me, my dear Tullia.

TULLIA. As Callias was with me one afternoon, about a month after our marriage, he desired me to strip naked, to take off all, even my shift. But..., but, hush!

OTTAVIA. Ah! ah! I see our champions coming to us.

TULLIA. I hear them talk. Go on as thou hast begun, Ottavia! Thou art just going to play at a singular kind of game. Cheer up! What a lot of

cups of nectar thy thirsty vulva will drink!

OTTAVIA. I tremble for fear.

TULLIA. I wish thee success, Rangoni! I am now putting there in the arms of a very comely lady, if ever there was one. Nowhere wilt thou find one more worthy of thy love; intoxicated with voluptuousness, thou wilt presently own it : I hold it as a certainty.

LAMPRIDIO. Rangoni is much obliged to thee, Ottavia; and he will soon express his gratitude to thee in a singular manner by breaking thy racer, as it deserves.

RANGONI. I know that henceforth my felicity will be complete. How now, Ottavia? why art thou pensive and sad and senseless? Art thou not aware that thou owest Venus a wake?

OTTAVIA. Away, away! I shall pitch myself out of bed, stop! I shall make the house ring with my cries. Stop! Why art thou annoying me, thou saucy fellow? Why dost thou contaminate me with those polluted kisses, those lewd touches?

RANGONI. O how pretty thou art! O thou art divine, if thou art but as indulgent and good-natured as thou art fair!

TULLIA. Whither art thou fleeing? Thou art not wise, Ottavia. Come, Rangoni, stop the fugitive with thy fixed bayonet. Come!

LAMPRIDIO. What's all this brawling about? Whence arises this dispute?

OTTAVIA. Take pity on me, Lampridio.

LAMPRIDIO. What! thou refusest to give thyself up to the supreme enjoyment, and I should take pity on thee? Why should there be any occasion for mercy here?

OTTAVIA. Thou seest how they all ill-using me, both she, thy Tullia there, and that fellow, I don't know who he is, thy friend perhaps. Ah, unhappy me!

TULLIA. It is all right. Now ease thyself of that, Ottavia, of that trouble which is raging within thy bowels. But retire, Lampridio.

LAMPRIDIO. Why hinder me from feasting my eyes and imagination on this truly voluptuous sight?

OTTAVIA. Ha! ha! ha! how stern thou art!... Well now, now whatever thou wilt and as thou wilt I shall now do it, Rangoni. I shall comply with all, all thy desires. Wait a moment till I put myself in a better position for thy pleasure.

TULLIA. Whilst showing off thy intemperance as one out of her senses, thou didst throw thy thigh over the bed-stock.

LAMPRIDIO. Go to the end with it, Rangoni; let nothing balk thee. With my own hands I shall support and raise this marble column.

OTTAVIA. Let me alone, thou sot, let me alone. What makes thee scratch my heel with thy nails? Ah! ah! And thou, Rangoni, how thou redoublest those fierce thrusts of thine! I'm, I'm dying!

TULLIA. Come, Rangoni, come, make haste. I shall handle those testicles of thine, the source of delights. Dost thou see this harlot who is fainting? Make them rain down immediately the vital balsam for the dying creature.

RANGONI. See how my vein of love begins to be inflamed in a moment, and how it distils veneries for my dear Venus.

OTTAVIA. Thou needst not spare my person. Lo!... How didst thou like that staking? And this one? And this? Ah! what do I feel?... How thou art assuaging the itchy spots in me by a warm... ah! ah! shower... ah! ah! how abundant!... ah! ah! how luscious! How thou quickenest and exanimatest me, arbitrator of my life and death...

TULLIA. And thou art, I warrant thee, drier than the pumice-stone. Are thy venereal brooks choked up, Ottavia?

OTTAVIA. Hush. Eh! eh! Hold thy tongue. Hush. All is well. Hem! hem!

TULLIA. Accelerate thy speed, Rangoni; be ready at my beck. With brisker extimulation deliver thy dear nymph of her rising humour. It is well, wondrous well!

OTTAVIA. Oh! thou hast almost stifled me by that concussion, and now thou art at it again. The rage with which thou didst set me on fire has begun to calm down a little. Why, thy lubric nerve is still dropping into my vein? I feel!... I feel!... There is to be no end to it? How delightfully thou art pissing in me! Thou wilt fill me, I fancy, with this warm seed, and thou wilt turn a little girl into a whirlpool of Venereal brine.

LAMPRIDIO. Meanwhile, I am wasted and worn out. Hasten to the goal, Rangoni. The crowning of thy so great a felicity makes me wretched.

OTTAVIA. What a troublesome fellow thou art, Lampridio! I am fainting, I am fainting, again. Owing to thy flagging, Rangoni, thou almost killest me, me who am still languishing. Thou leavest me so soon?

TULLIA. So soon? What sort of madness is thine? By Venus! Why, Jupiter's copulation could scarcely be compared with it, when he begot Hercules with Alcmena. Ah! see how swiftly the stiff, fiery and stately nerve of Lampridio wags up and down! Give it a welcome reception.

LAMPRIDIO. If to this fiery cleft this fiery and stiff...

TULLIA. And with this so violent a shock thou hast finished the conversation.

OTTAVIA. Well now, Lampridio, assist me, assist me.

LAMPRIDIO. Assist thou likewise, Ottavia; assist, Tullia.

TULLIA. What wouldst thou have both of us do?

LAMPRIDIO. I wish Ottavia, while I am conversing with her paps, to swing her buttocks in a measured and slow kind of motivation. And that tickling left hand of thine, Tullia, to excite by a salacious friction my scrotum and testicles to a complete enjoyment.

TULLIA. Play thy own part, thou jack. We shall each act ours admirably well.

OTTAVIA. Thou art giving me a cruel thumping, Lampridio. But thou shalt not get off with impunity. To these thrusts I shall reply by redoubled jerks. Here, here, here. Am I pleasing thee?

TULLIA. Lampridio, thou art showing thyself a truly notable warrior. After having driven alike dagger right home to the hilt, how thou causest not the death but the delights of expiring Ottavia! One would imagine, Ottavia, that thou art on for giving up the ghost, whilst this amorous hero looks as if he would remove his whole being into thy very bowels.

OTTAVIA. What idle talk! Why distract me in the height of so agreeable a sensation of an insatia-

ble pleasure? But..., but... there is burning within me a liquid mass of quick fire.

TULLIA. Ay, from the fireband that Lampridio's love, concentrated in thy penetrails, is brandishing inside of thee. I will, nevertheless, kiss thee, my own Lampridio.

LAMPRIDIO. O fond kiss, pleasing augmentation of my delight! Come close to me also with those orbed breasts of ivory, that I may kiss them Now... now, Ottavia, Tullia, there are escaping from me libidi... libidinous streams!

OTTAVIA. I feel, I feel them running into my pond. Go on. Oh! oh! go on. And I, and I!

TULLIA. And thou, and thou, mayest thou melt into a flood, Help each other. It's all right, by the God Subigus! It is admirably well. Eh, Rangoni! what art thou musing over all the while, mute and still?

RANGONI. This thou mayst have conjectured.

TULLIA. Thou showest the mentule. How big it has become in a moment for the duel! Thou art a wonderful warrior. A taste of no repose is granted the poor creature as far as I can see.

RANGONI.

> The relaxation of action being the same for all,
> The labour should be likewise the same for all.

LAMPRIDIO. Here now, Rangoni, enter upon this

vacant field, not indeed of Mars, but of Venus, although Mars would fain come down into it. It has so overwhelmed me with joy!

RANGONI. Thou art shunning me again, my own Goddess, by turning thy back to me?

OTTAVIA. Not; but I sue for a short respite.

TULLIA. Having changed shapes, rouse thy failing desire; for thou art spent and languishing. Thus voluptuousness must be tempered, that voluptuousness may incessantly beget voluptuousness.

OTTAVIA. But see how Rangoni provokes and vexes vanquished me, the mean fellow!

RANGONI. I shall wait however. What shall I do, Tullia? Give the law: of the amorous struggle; thou who art the next president after Venus.

TULLIA. Thou seest me, Ottavia, how I set my buttocks up over my knees on lowering the rest of my body? Now, throw thyself supinely on my loins, so that coupled together thy back may cling to my back, thy buttocks to mine. Having next spread out thy thighs, lean as hard as thou canst upon the soles of thy feet that I may have less weight to bear.

OTTAVIA. The weight will be most undoubtedly too heavy for thee, when this home-made god lies upon me. I shall however obey the Qeen of amours, that I may incur no reproach.

TULLIA. Rangoni would not wish to crush me :

I know it, I. He will sustain the weight of his own body; neither skill nor expedient will be wanting.

RANGONI. I shall be as lenient to each of you as I possibly can. O what an alluring posture! I hereby bury this rude javelin in this divine beauty. I beg thee, Ottavia, to take it in good sense.

OTTAVIA. Make haste, my King; I feel a fresh titillation rising in the bottom of my reins. Is that right, Tullia? How funny! how funny!

TULLIA. Wag thy buttocks, Ottavia, as I am wagging mine. Keep time with me : it will be most agreeable to him and thee. Admirably! admirably! How the quivering lubricities of thy loins are stirred up!

RANGONI. Endeavour to move up and down in rapid succession; thou likewise, Tullia. Forward the work by your own activity. Bravo! bravo!

TULLIA. I understand these ardent and rough compressions; I understand the language of the voluptuous flood issuing out of the lake in his loins. Make thy buttocks vibrate upwards to him, Ottavia, while I am assisting him, now that he is gasping.

OTTAVIA. Tullia! Tullia!... Thou, Rangoni, thou art transporting me with fury. I can not help giving utterance to my frenzy. I feel it fall down drop by drop... Ah! ha!

TULLIA. The rain..

OTTAVIA. Which Danae, the daughter of Acrisius, would prefer to her dear Jupiter's golden shower. Act, Tullia, act!...

TULLIA. I have my own part to act, and I am acting it.

OTTAVIA. Twice already, twice thou, Rangoni. Eh! eh!... and I three times. Ah! ah! ah!

TULLIA. That is to say, thou hast thrice paid right willingly tribute to Venus out of thy own substance.

RANGONI. Certainly this town does not contain a pair of more merry and lascivious young women than you both. No conjunction, even with the naked Graces, could be more agreeable than this one was. May I die if Venus herself, the seeker and deviser of pleasure, has ever known a more ingenious posture for procuring the sweetest delectation!

LAMPRIDIO. Wilt thou also try the thing with me, Ottavia? Please do not shift in the meantime, Tullia.

TULLIA. I consent to it, and Ottavia too. But my limbs will be worn out with lassitude, I fear, before the work is finished.

OTTAVIA. How rough thou art! How hard is thy nerve; which thou hast just thrusted into the soft marigold of lasciviousness!

TULLIA. Thou, my own Lampridio, rushest somewhat more vehemently than I, who am so tired,

can bear it. Put an end to it at once, make haste; the hams of my legs are failing me, I am falling upon my side.

OTTAVIA. Venus confound thee, Tullia! thou who hast spoiled, or at least interrupted so fine a mounting. I am raising, I am raising my reins, Lampridio; all my delights are set before thee.

LAMPRIDIO. I intend to play just the point of my spear along the verge of the slit, and over the soft friction of the lips. Allow me to gratify this humour, Ottavia.

TULLIA. Thou allowest him, dost thou not, Ottavia?

OTTAVIA. I do; but he will not.

TULLIA. With this left hand of mine, Lampridio, I shall grasp the glaive with which thou fighest.

LAMPRIDIO. Ah, madam! the mentule, which thou leadest into the pleasant field of desires, will, while thou art clasping it tight with thy fingers, receive twice as much delight from his double conch: from the one which the author Nature framed for thee, Ottavia; from the other which thou, Tullia, framest for me with such skill, in thy industrious hand.

OTTAVIA. Go to, go to. It is of great use to me, indeed.

LAMPRIDIO. What wouldst thou have, madam?

The boiling venereal spume is already gushing out, it is now raging. Well, well, well!

TULLIA. Lo, Ottavia, swallow this red-hot bar. And thou hast swallowed it in a trice.

OTTAVIA. Lampridio, Lampridio, act, act! I am rapt up in Venus's heaven. Push, ah! push, ah! push.

LAMPRIDIO. Here, I have enough still left, thou perceivest? to bedew the flower of thy youth. See how I, the priest of Priapus and Venus, do pour the nectar in thee, the victim of my passion. Lo... lo!...

TULLIA. And thou hast finished too, Ottavia?

OTTAVIA. I have. Hug me, Lampridio, give me a kiss.

TULLIA. Thou peevish and wanton harlot!

OTTAVIA. But there is stealing gradually into my limbs some sort of faintness that is making me dull with heavy stupor.

RANGONI. Thou shalt rest, my own Venus, when thou hast satisfied me with the fruit of thy delights. Be pleased now to receive this conjunction in the delicious spot.

TULLIA. Thou mayst go be hanged if ever thou hast a design for the foul spot!

RANGONI. By Subigus! every spot of a pretty girl, as Ottavia, is delicious : for we are told that the whole body of a handsome woman forms but a

single conch. Now, laying aside all trifling, let us enter upon something more serious. Stretch thyself to thy full length, darling Venus, stretch thyself.

TULLIA. In what position shall she put herself in order to afford thee a more agreeable union? Ah! a thought has just come into my head. I shall keep standing, and, while Ottavia is lying flat on her back, I shall lift her right leg as high as ever I can, so that the tester of the bed may come in contact with her heel. Thou wilt stretch out the other thigh, Ottavia, as stiff as possible. Thus the avenue of the conch will become much narrower, and consequently more pleasing to him that is entering it. Well now, lift up thy leg, Ottavia. Be ready, Rangoni; mount, apply the spur.

OTTAVIA. No sooner said than done. How submissive, Tullia, thou hast this athlete in this kind of palæstra! But thy to and fro movements, dear Tullia, are too vehement for me. Thou wilt, I fear, dislocate my thigh, unless thou takest heed.

RANGONI. Thou art playing at a truly singular game, Tullia. Thou hast no need, Ottavia, to stir thy loins: Tullia is supplying all the motions by herself.

OTTAVIA. I have little or no part to play here, beyond my compliance with thy desire. Thou art indebted to Tullia for the rest. But the scalding jet

is already striking me in the innermost deposit of pleasures. Oh! eh! ah!

TULLIA. How now, Ottavia? this continual motitation does not inflame thee for the supreme delights? Thy wild eyes are closing. Thou art about to melt, thou art about to melt, I see it, I.

OTTAVIA. I am, I am. The act is being played inside. Ah! ah! Stop a moment, Rangoni; the act is over. Ah! ah!

RANGONI. Never did Venus behold so delicious a little whore as thou art. Thou hast devoured the whole of my mentule. How slim, how puny it returns to me! When I lent it to thee it was plump, ruddy and full of life. Give me back the one I lent thee, wench. The one thou givest me back is not mine : I do not recognise it.

TULLIA. Ho, Lampridio, obtain satisfaction for the loss inflicted on thy friend : for I have seen thee drink a glass of medicinal wine. Thy force is restored and thy rapid venereal spring replenished.

LAMPRIDIO. I have drunk indeed, and imbibed new ardours with the wine : thy friend Ottavia shall soon feel them.

OTTAVIA. You will kill me, I fancy, by your sport and the violence of your dalliances.

TULLIA. Renounce such fears : since it is by this way that all species of animals are brought into existence, the nerve which infuses life will not, be

assured, Ottavia, cause death. Rangoni, take this victorious Heroine of thine prone upon thy shoulders.

RANGONI. Well, when I have taken her upon them, what of that?

TULLIA. Thou but take her up. Thou, Ottavia, jump out of bed.

OTTAVIA. My loins are failing me. You look upon me as an elephant, and not as a young woman.

TULLIA. Thou art delicate and thou behavest delicately. Obey me, Rangoni; seize on the silly creature. This plot is being contrived for thee, Lampridio.

OTTAVIA. Wait a moment, Rangoni. I shall leap upon thy shoulders of myself.

TULLIA. It is the doing and not the saying is wanted. See how Lampridio erects. Put his burning hot fireband into thy lantern. Now then! now then!

LAMPRIDIO. Ottavia, thou hast sprung very cleverly upon that charger.

TULLIA. Now, Rangoni, interlace the young woman's arms with thine. Open thy thighs, Ottavia.

LAMPRIDIO. Open, dear goddess, open dear goddess Venus, the beauties of thy venereal garden.

TULLIA. Open them thyself; stick the key in the lock.

OTTAVIA. Well, I was afraid of something or other more foul; I was afraid lest thou shouldst have a design on me in that spot where it is indecent to be attacked.

RANGONI. We mean to favour only the right and acceptable spot with our concussions and flames. But make haste, Lampridio; look to what thou art about.

LAMPRIDIO. When I have got in between Ottavia's thighs, thou, Tullia, raise them so as to enable me to thrust the javelin the more readily into the gaping vulva.

TULLIA. No sooner hast thou ordered it than it is executed.

OTTAVIA. Upon my honour! this can not be done without causing me considerable damage : the skin of my belly is distended so much that it is ready to tear asunder. Moreover, the peg which thou art driving in, Lampridio, has as much as ever it can do to enter.

LAMPRIDIO. So much the better. The amusement will be only the more grateful to thee and me. I shall not arrive at Venus's inner seat by a straight path. The way becomes inflected on the intruder, owing to the lower juncture of the belly being inflected.

OTTAVIA. Well, well!

TULLIA. I shall give thy ivory-white thighs a

slight shaking, Ottavia, and thus assist sweating Lampridio. Well! how vehement thy swift thrusts are, Lampridio! I dare say thou art on for casting horse and rider upon their heads. Go at it more gently.

OTTAVIA. Why dost thou delay him now that he is in a hurry? The dickens... Ah!... Why stop him when he was going apace? Ah! ah!... The dickens take thee!

TULLIA. And the venereal drops are trickling from thee so soon! How tenderly Venus loves thee! But, Lampridio, thy lubric seed-vein is heating up rather slowly? Has this conch, this conch worthy of Jupiter, fascinated the power of thy stiff mentule?

. OTTAVIA. Thou must be cheating, thou must be cheating! Thou must be joking. Ah! it is raining!... I am fainting!

LAMPRIDIO. Now accept these few drops of loving balsam... ah! ah! ah!... in atonement for thy fainting.

TULLIA. Shake it, pull it out. Let none of the liquor which may remain in the tube on plucking it out go to loss on my friend Ottavia. Suck, Ottavia, suck the divine honey with the lips of thy nethermouth.

LAMPRIDIO. So that is over. Surely, this conjunction has refreshed me exceedingly with its caprices.

It has filled me with delight, nor has it wasted my strength.

TULLIA. Now, Rangoni, lay down thy precious burden. Nay, suffer so comely a mistress of yours to repose for a while her limbs weary after so many engagements. See how she can hardly stand on her feet. You have disabled with your nerves, you wicked fellows, the nerves of the delicate young woman's hams.

OTTAVIA. Pray, Rangoni, throw me on the tick of the bed. I could never get upon it by myself.

TULLIA. This simulation of lassitude is of no avail to thee. It was agreed on with these champions that each of them was to feast his love on thee ten times. Nor is it by making a truce that thou wilt free thyself the sooner from their embraces.

OTTAVIA. Act more humanely with me, my Heroes. If it be your intention to make me go to the twentieth coition, I am a dead woman. Act more humanely, my Hercules.

TULLIA. Thou shalt finish the twenty rides tonight, whether thou wilt or no.

OTTAVIA. Thou monster! thou must be telling stories.

TULLIA. Thus far, thou hast fought only seven battles. Thou wantest three more to make up ten.

Afterwards we shall retire to the next room, where I shall occupy myself with comforting thee and attending to thy person. This truce will be but the renewing of battle.

OTTAVIA. Whisper, Tullia.

TULLIA. Speak out, speak out, and no whispering.

OTTAVIA. It would be impudent of me, were I to dare do the like. Whisper. That place is itching me horribly; I feel it burning. What am I to do? I am unable to bear it.

TULLIA. Ah! ah! thanks to your jumpings and thumpings, Rangoni and Lampridio, you have brought on a very funny sort of distemper!... Ah! ah! Ottavia is complaining of...

OTTAVIA. Hush; I shall fall upon thee with my fist; hush.

RANGONI. She is complaining of?... Pray, dear Tullia, of what is she complaining?

TULLIA. Of a burning in her...

OTTAVIA. What art thou prating about? what art thou prating about?

TULLIA. Goatish spot, the goatish and peevish creature!

OTTAVIA. The most prating of women are not fit to hold a candle to thee. A little more and I would hate thee mortally.

RANGONI. Lampridio, dost thou remember Laura?

LAMPRIDIO. I do; and I also remember thy kindness towards me. For it was owing to thy kindness that my bull toiled on her land.

TULLIA. Of course that is she whom thou, Rangoni, didst get Lampridio to enjoy? Thou didst put a nice trick upon the fond and credulous girl. A fresh token of true friendship!

OTTAVIA. If I have found any grace in thy eyes, Rangoni, and if thou lovest me, Lampridio, relate how the thing happened.

RANGONI. Let Lampridio tell it; for I but merely directed the performance; I had no part in its acting.

LAMPRIDIO. I was at Rangoni's house in Rome about the close of autumn. Laura's lecherous eyes enslaved me, yet she was chaste and still a virgin. I was love-sick; she was distractedly fond of Rangoni. The latter had perceived her passion for him and mine for her. So he persuaded the young girl's nurse to let him into Laura's chamber at mid-night. The old woman, aware of the girl's affections, promised the yearning creature an opportunity of tasting all the delights of love, in case she conformed herself to her will. She obeyed. So Rangoni substituted me in his stead. I was off to her chamber door at the appointed time, and the old one led me by the hand to the young girl who was lying on the bed. All was in darkness.

Rangoni's mother was sleeping close by in an adjacent room : Laura was the daughter of her sister. The old woman reminded us that it was no place for us to hold a conversation; that we should not even speak in a whisper, lest the suspicious dame might hear us. On putting her mouth to my ear while speaking, she added that I should use moderate thrusts and noiseless struggle in performing the act with the maid, lest the creaking of the bed when shaken might awake her sleeping mistress.

TULLIA. What a sage and stern bedfellow Laura had that night! Well, I guess, thou didst carry off the palm of gravity from Cato in point of copulating.

LAMPRIDIO. Thou art merry. On finding the maid naked, I instantly threw off my clothes and stretched myself beside her tender rame. « Thou » knowest, » said the nurse to her, « there are cer- » tain things I should inform thee about, daughter. » Thou must undergo a fair share of suffering to » enjoy the love of thy own Rangoni; for this » same love gushes out by means of a thick, stiff » and hasty nerve. Be that as it may, remain » silent, unless thou wilt ruin you both. » Thereupon, the old one snatched my mentule « I shall lead » it in person, » she muttered, « to the entrance » of the sovereign good. Thou, Laura, hug him. » I got upon her. The nurse eagerly applied the cata-

pult; I made a thrust : it entered the shattered door by three inches. The nurse, on removing her fist, took the scrotum in the hollow of her hand, and began to tickle it with the tops of her fingers.

OTTAVIA. How did Laura behave with respect to herself and thee?

LAMPRIDIO. Whit her other hand, the duenna raised the maid's buttock, whilst I was burying the sword up to the hilt in her delicate body. « Ah! » ah! ah! » she sighed; and immediately a heavy shower of humour fell from my spout into her salvatory. She folded me in her arms; she gave me smacks; and, being now a wife, she poured unotion of sorrow with her sighs, as the widowed turtledove. The old woman, ever ready to serve us, squeezed my mentule with her benign fingers : the maid did not let a single drop be wasted.

TULLIA. And the virgin filtered nothing from her loins for the finishing of the operation?

LAMPRIDIO. Our libidinous fury was nicely calmed for each of us. For, while Laura kept hoisting one thigh after the other, now tossing herself about in her over-excitement, now pressing her pubis to mine on raising her buttocks, in short, while receiving the luscious stream, that was flowing into her, with sighs, commotions and a lustful humming, lo, Rangoni's mother stepped in.

TULLIA. I am afraid, I am greatly afraid for you.

The noisy outbreak of your impotent rage awoke the mother of Rangoni?

RANGONI. Thou art right. What quick wit copulating women have!

LAMPRIDIO. « Laura, what noise is that I hear? » cried the matron. « Art thou alone? » — « We are » all alone, » replied the nurse. — « A vision appear- » ed to me in my sleep, » rejoined Laura; « while » starting from it in my fright I was near trumbling » out of bed. » — « Yea, thou ravest so young? » replied Margarita (this was the matron's name). « Settle thyself down to rest. Those hideous scare- » crows of dreams are nothing. » — « I cast myself » out of bed as soon as I heard my child troubled », rejoined the nurse; and, talking on purpose, she ran up and down making a great noise. But the terrified Laura kept pressing me to her breast with trembling arms. — « I died, » she would say; « I » died, cousin; perhaps thou too wilt die, 'tis » dreadful; but I shall die with thee, and it'll be » nothing. » But, in order that she might not be sensible of her dying, I mounted her, brandished the javelin and thrust it into the warm, tumid receptacle of Venus. Then, the marriage being joyfully consummated, the old woman turned me out of the chamber whether I would or no.

RANGONI. Laura has a sappy body like thine, Ottavia; her breasts are round and plump, but not so

far apart, as thine. They kiss in mutual emulation, as if they loved each other.

TULLIA. Though this close union of the breasts is excellent for the highest pitch of pleasure, yet it is not so for the commendation of beauty.

OTTAVIA. For the highest pitch of pleasure?

TULLIA. Later on thou wilt understand the expression. But for the present understand this one : thou art still wanting three coitions before arriving at the highest pitch of pleasure.

RANGONI. See how Priapus, in the person of my mentule, is already intimating to her his joy by gestures to begin battle! See how I erect! But I wish to proceed to business by a new way.

TULLIA. By a new way? No, so help me my prurience! No, thou shalt not proceed by a new way.

RANGONI. I have tripped with my tongue : I meant to say, by a new posture.

TULLIA. Well now, what sort of one will it be? Ah! one just presents itself to my mind, they call it Hector's horse. Strech thyself flat on thy back, Rangoni, and let that fulminating spear seek out the enemy it intends to stab. Exactly! But why toss up thy head so haughtily, thou lascivious tail?

OTTAVIA. Thou wilt be punished, swaggerer, thou wilt. What shall I do, Tullia?

TULLIA. Rise and get Rangoni in under thy thighs on turning thy back to him. Let the dagger of him lying down correspond with the sheath of thee bent over him. Thou art in a suitable position. It is all right.

RANGONI. O thou back of Dione's daughter! O ye loins of ivory! O ye incendiary buttocks!

TULLIA. Cease this abusive language. Whoever lavishes too much praise on the buttock rails at the conch. I see where this design thou hast on the buttocks is tending. I hate such prevaricating eulogies. Thou at least art wise, Ottavia : the greedy conch has swallowed thy unruly mentule, Rangoni.

OTTAVIA. Come, Rangoni! here! here!... Come, Rangoni, to my help! This hook which thou hast cast into my lake is drawing out of the bottom of my belly an extreme amount of voluptuousness. Come, Rangoni!

RANGONI. Here I am, Ottavia, here I am, here I am. Art thou coming? art thou coming?

OTTAVIA. So I am, so I am, so I am! Ah! ah!

TULLIA. O ye sighs that Venus herself would covet! You have both fainted way so soon? It is rather too soon for thee, Ottavia. Here is an amorous torch still burning which thou shouldst have extinguished in thee, hadst thou wished to be overwhelmed with supreme luxury.

LAMPRIDIO. Whither art thou starting, fugitive? Thou art making game of me? Thou dost not want me to finish? It had been better to have refused.

OTTAVIA. I declare from the bottom of my heart : I am spent. This last struggle has enfeebled me as I pressed the more strenuously on the sinews of my hams.

TULLIA. Nonsense! It was a mere skirmish, and not a regular battle. Thou didst look as if thou wouldst brave the club of Hercules, and in less than no time thou feignest to have lost thy force? Nonsense!

OTTAVIA. All my senses are blunted within me as if shrunk into themselves. Didst thou not make love to me while I was alive? Whatever further meddling thou wouldst have with me, Lampridio, thou wilt be ashamed to confess it : because thou wilt be defiled for having had intercourse with a corpse.

LAMPRIDIO. I shall recall thee to life with this spring wand of Mercury, this blazing spectre of Venus, this golden branch. See, feel. I shall confer on thee the power of immortality : by this venereal apotheosis I shall place thee among the goddesses.

OTTAVIA. Hah!... hah!... dost thou not hear, Lampridio? Somebody is knocking furiously at the hall door. Now, what is the meaning of that?

May the gods and goddesses, presidents and priestesses of amours, confound whoever comes to disturb so singular a game, be he whatsoever juggler he may!

LAMPRIDIO. The knocking becomes louder, I shall go away. The door is open and here he comes to us at a great rate : he is in the next room.

TULLIA. Go out, go out of here. Betake yourselves to the room which is prepared for you, that there may be no ground for scandal.

RANGONI. And you, shut up your seraglio.

OTTAVIA. Farewell, my own Rangoni. Farewell, Lampridio; you are each of you my light : by thus slaying me amicably, you have made me vanish agreeably out of sight! No life is more quick than this death.

TULLIA. We have nothing to fear. Our husbands are away : I have taken care that the servants, the suspicious brutes, may be nothing the wiser of those pleasures of ours. There is no danger of anything. Well! thou knowest the character of the Prefect : he is a good-natured, polite sort of man, a rake to even get himself talked about. He is in the habit of spending occasional sleepless nights in revelries and wanton tricks, with the young men whom he regards with respect or by whom he wishes to be respected. He gets those whom he loves or esteems to share in his over-free conver-

sations, jests and sparks of wit. Thus, by this courteous easiness of manners, he won over the affection of all classes of society without wronging his good nome. By Venus! only the man that knows how to live in this world deserves to be alive. For, the keeping of one's self from Venus, Bacchus and games falls short of being an existence. Yet, we should avoid the foolish maliciousness of a certain category of men, who imagine that they themselves are the only wise ones in the world. They regard nothing but their own persons and insipid haughty manners :

Judges unrighteous to others, upright to themselves.

Let us shun the very sight of such fellows, Ottavia; let us shun the Harpies, those ferocious, obscene and rapacious birds with human faces. Thev befoul all that is fair, under the show of a censorial gravity, and they profane whatever is worshipful by their misdeeds. Yet, it is necessary to think of honour.

OTTAVIA. Now, what dost thou term honourable manners? For there is a great divergence of opinion on this point.

TULLIA. Honourable is what honourable seems. Men inquire into absolutely nothing except what falls under their senses. Assume an honourable appearance. Whoever carefully keeps it up, is consi-

dered every where as an honourable man. Indulge in pleasures, but cover it with the show of honour: yet thou wilt nevertheless pass for an honest woman. If, on the contrary, by raising the curtain thou wilt be seen departing ever so little from the severe doctrine of the sots, who will fain be the only wise ones in the world, they will inveigh against thee with opprobrious words; and the malicious and unmerciful wretches will, out of a treacherous simulation, howl that they pity thee as a lost case. These same fellows hide themselves, they go about masked, and to this end they exert the utmost endeavours in order to remain hid. Let us hide ourselves likewise. The whole world exercises the art of stage-playing. At the theatres, while the play is going on, we praise or blame what the actors perform before us, or deliver on the proscenium. We say nothing about their doings or sayings inside the scene, once the curtain is pulled down. Now, with regard to our civil intercourse, we expose to criticisms what we do under every body's eyes, but not what we cloak and perform diligently. O, did we but see in their true light those mighty Magnates of ours, when left alone to themselves and the passions which Nature ingrafted in them, and those self-conceited personages, I know not how to style them, who feign humility and by a sham strictness of morals,

chalk out the way to heaven! O, did we only see them! But here comes Lampridio.

LAMPRIDIO. The long-haired boys, whom the Prefect sent to us from the pages' apartment, have just informed us that he (the Prefect) has something pleasing to communicate to us. He desires us to go to see him if there is no inconvenience.

RANGONI. What must we do, dear Tullia? What wouldst thou advise us to, Ottavia?

TULLIA. What honour requires.

RANGONI. Who would style it honourable to part from one's amours, which are so pleasant, so merry, so witty?

OTTAVIA. I am pained at it.

TULLIA. Yet it is necessary to obey. For Magnates raised to such a high degree of honour ordain whatever they choose, exact whatever they request. Get you gone. A kiss, Lampridio.

OTTAVIA. All my delights shall depart with you. A kiss, Rangoni. O, thou moiety of my soul!

LAMPRIDIO. So sweet a kiss as I now take shall keep thee present to my mind. But grant me a complete enjoyment, Ottavia.

OTTAVIA. No, I shall not.

RANGONI. Nor to me either?

TULLIA. To neither of you. Yield to necessity and not to love, you clever merry-makers and lewdsters.

LAMPRIDIO. May hymenean Juno frown upon me, but I would rather depart this life then be severed from your arms!

RANGONI. I would sooner spend a night with you, dear Venuses, than all the days of my life with Jupiter, the protector of Princes.

TULLIA. They are gone. Now, trust to human things, and conceive great expectations! Unhappy Ottavia's restless prurience was expecting about a score of inspersions : they scarcely amounted to eight. Go now, and trust to human things!

OTTAVIA. This burden would have been too heavy for my loins; but thou wouldst be able for it, owing to thine being more lusty and nimble. Perhaps I might have got safe and sound to the tenth coition; I would have gone no farther. Pleasure does not consist in the tiring out of pleasure.

TULLIA. Thou didst, notwithstanding, brave the assaults of Rangoni and Lampridio when they were breaking into thy trench; thou didst waste their force; thou didst imbibe all their moisture : thou who art so tender, whose loins are so delicate, so soft!

OTTAVIA. Yet these onsets have completely banished sleep from me; I would not sleep, even though I had a great mind to do so. We must talk together.

TULLIA. Thou wilt have Venus last till morning,

at least in the shape of a free and licentious conversation. But I see a scroll there upon the floor; Lampridio or Rangoni must have lost it. Let us see what it contains.

OTTAVIA. Let us see; give it to me to read.

TULLIA. Here, read it.

OTTAVIA. A letter written without skill or arrangement; you see at a glance it is a girl's handwriting.

LAURA TO RANGONI, HER AMOUR

I dare not address thee the salutation I expect from thee, unhappy creature that I am, since thou dost not wish me to be saved. From what freak of envious Destiny did it come to pass, that thou hast not called to see me at the time thou didst promise my fond passion? All this while I am not living, and yet I can not die. I am alive only for thy sake, my life! on thy account I shall die, I who am thine. The former sweetly soothes my sad soul, whilst the idea of the latter dissuades me, me who am so fond of thee, from hanging myself. Steering onwards between life and death, I stand on the brink of both. If thou comest, I return to life; shouldst thou refuse, I run into death; the road is short. All mirth is far from me; I am away from myself, when thou art absent from me. Incessant emotions, sudden fears, desperate anxieties besiege wretched me, as if there were a rampart with palisadoes made round me; they storm me. Turn wheresoever I may, torments await me unless thou hastenest to deliver me from so many evils and from my own madness. Now, in case I thought thou despisest me, I would look upon myself as doomed to death, and I would die, I who began to die ever since the day that, inflamed with love for thee, I rave as one mad. Come quickly, if thou wilt have me recover my right reason. Farewell.

TULLIA. Truly, this Laura, who knows how to write so well, has a great penetration and force of mind. I should imagine that every species of enjoyment is to be had in her amorous intercourse, she who is so ingenious!

OTTAVIA. Did she also admit Rangoni to her embraces? I thought she had waved her loins for none but Lampridio.

TULLIA. The flame had got nestled in the very marrow of the young girl's bones; already the prurient tide was beginning to rise in those spots, which Venus, until then unknown to her, had devoted to her own purpose. Ever and anon all night, out of the impotence of love. she kept rolling her delicate limbs over the bed. She used to say she was on fire. Her nurse imagined that she was gone mad. « I shall get thee a remedy for » this distemper, daughter, » said she. « But forbear » a while such folly. Be of good hope : he who has » driven thee mad will cure thee of the insanity. » Do not despair, I pray thee. Away with these » furies which are baneful to thee as well as fatal » to me! » When morning dawned, the old woman ran straight to Rangoni and related to him the true state of affairs; she entreated him to come and console the fond girl, to be pleased to preserve a beauty worthy of a suitor, such as Jupiter. Rangoni's mother was on her way since day-

break to the villa situated a few miles beyond the town. What was the young man to do? he yielded to persuasion : so he followed the old woman to where she intended to bring him. He found the young girl sitting up in bed with her hair in disorder, as a Mænades, wasting away her tender breast by sobs and obscuring by a tumid shower of tears her eyes' brightness which would have obscured the sun. On seeing him enter, she sprung to her feet, half naked as she was. « Thou didst come to » me, » she cried, while throwing her arms round his neck, « thou didst come to me, thou juggler, to » deprive me of sense, to me who until then knew » no blemish. Restore me pure to my former state : » thou canst not; make me a perpetual and cons- » tant present of thyself : thou canst. » At these words, a copious flood of tears flowed from her eyes. « I was inferior, » she added, « to none of the » noblest and most esteemed young ladies. I shone » with the glory of honour; I renounced it all for » thy sole sake, in order to gratify thee. I fell from » the pinnacle of my renown the very mo- » ment that, a willing victim, I grew inflamed » with a senseless love of thee. Take pity on me » Either make, if thou canst, that I be mistress » of myself : but, as far as I know myself, thou » couldst not; or make that thou becomest my » master, and that thou becomest it with all thy

» heart : thou couldst. But, as far as I know thee, » thou wilt not; because thou keepest for another » Venus thy embraces worthy of Venus herself. » In short, Rangoni did not suffer himself to be any longer loaded with reproaches. They made peace. Stimulated by the influence of the goddess of love, they offered libations to Venus, to the great pleasure of both.

OTTAVIA. So the raging furies of the inflamed Laura were allayed just as thine own in Dame Orsini's villa, the decent stew?

TULLIA. Thou maliciously wrestest the sense of an obscene term. Thou wouldst fain speak like a fool. Hear me. Those women are styled punks and courtesans who, while making nothing of voluptuousness, get themselves paid for performing it, or at least they generally expect to be paid; the stinking creatures spring from the wretched starving populace. Let them show themselves wherever they may, they carry with them the ordures of the stew, they are an ignominious opprobrium to themselves. But such a degrading title is altogether inapplicable to women placed in so high a station of life, as we are in. So, in order to pass thy judgment, thou must value each of us after her respective condition and dignity. The titles of punk and stew are meant to express debasement of condition and not of morals.

OTTAVIA. A nice argument! But, I think, thou hadst already received a score of javelin-thrusts in thy round buckler, when Rangoni came to interrupt those foul parts of thine, to agitate mine. He broke off the thread of thy story; I desire to hear it out to the end.

TULLIA. Well! I will go on with it.

OTTAVIA. Venus beshrew Aloisio and Fabrizio, the frightful rascals, who rebel against the natural order of pleasure!

TULLIA. Yet, very clever men state that such an act is not too reprehensible; that the hind-grot forms a part of woman's body, just as the hands do; that there is, therefore, no more harm in it than there would be for a wife to handle her husband's mentule. It would be wrong, however, unless the genital shower sprinkled the feminine garden. Well! be that as it will, dear Ottavia, the whole thing seems to my mind, if not most infamous, at least ridiculous.

OTTAVIA. In my opinion, it is both ridiculous and loathsome. What sort of pleasure can one sex have in outwitting the other, a prey to cruel furies? Would not he, that had a mind to show humanity its due respect, abhor the like infamy? The man that makes so perverse a use of a young girl actually spoils the comeliness of her fair form. I wonder how such a

madness could have taken possession of our men's minds.

TULLIA. Astrologers, the interpreters of the sky, tell us that it proceeds from the foul side of a certain constellation, which does not blow its infection alike upon those born beyond the Alps. The Italians and Spaniards are exceedingly pleased with this kind of service from the boys and girls. When they ask it of us, they call it, corollary; but when they demand it of the boys, they term it, office. The Osks looked upon it as an honest action. Thou knowest how highly intelligent the Greeks were? Well! they worshipped Venus Callipyge, in other words, *Venus with the fine buttocks*, and they gave the Callipygean sisters the prize of beauty. So this honour was conferred neither on the brightness of the eyes nor the prettiness of the face, but on the fine buttocks. Indeed, whoever would not hate the thighs, is forced not to hate the buttocks. Wilt thou deny that they have been from the beginning the root and most desirable part of the thighs?

OTTAVIA. They are delightful to behold, gratifying to touch, but let them serve as toys for the eyes and hands. I would deem him, that would seek any other enjoyment than this from them, a most defiled wretch that infects air and space.

TULLIA. Softly! I do not see why a hero should

be reviled for trying on the effigy of a sham enemy what he could do, when engaged in regular warfare, by piercing it with a weapon, which he may shortly have to turn against the real enemy.

OTTAVIA. Thou entitlest interlude that scornful onset which thou didst sustain?

TULLIA. And thou? wilt thou disavow the proceedings of Caviceo? Thy blushing accuses thee. Thou art complimentary, indeed! Why insult me, thou silly creature?

OTTAVIA. Well, on two occasions, I confess, Caviceo adventured to see whether he could or no, but he could not; so he contained himself ever after. It was afternoon when he desired me to lie down naked. While he was kissing, fondling and tickling me, a strange whim came into his head. He began to stroke me very softly on the bottom, as I lay listless. — « Ottavia, my darling, » said he, « raise those marble buttocks by leaning on thy » knees. Favour my love which thou changest into » folly. Let the two doors lie open, both the front » and the back one. Allow my wanton flame to » make for the one it would prefer : thou shalt » lose nothing thereby, depend upon it. With » their own moisture I shall cheer for thee the in- » most abodes of Venus; I shall humour thee with » a full, natural coition. Hence I am going to » begin the operation by the wrong way, and I

» shall end it by the right one. Like that, each of » us will be perfectly satisfied. » I obeyed, and there lay before him two ways leading to Venus : one of them, the king's high-road; the other, a craggy path overgrown with briers. To the latter, then, he applied the catapult, but to no purpose; in the very heat of alternating puffs and vehement thrusts he melted away into sweat. — « Thou wilt not obtain » the desired result, » said I. « Dost thou expect to » drive a big thick beam into a place where there » could not be room even for a straw? Dost thou » wish to burst me? Wilt thou have me rent » asunder, and the two slits become but one? » — « It looks like it, Ottavia, » he replied; « I am mad, » and he instantly took the sparrow down to the more spacious nest of pleasure underneath. In a few days time, he made a similar attempt, and obtained the same result. Again he gave over the undertaking, and divided me in the spot where it was agreeable to us both.

TULLIA. Thou hast just related exactly what befell me on this point with Callias, except that I added my defence over and above to the badness of the road, to make it appear to him still more rugged. « As woman I was wedded to thee, » said I, « and thou didst seek but woman's embraces. » Thou didst hope to have children by me, as well » as pleasure; so thou shalt procure thyself both

» pleasures and children only as far as I am wo-
» man; neither shalt thou cast a blemish upon
» mine honour, nor trifle with my bashfulness. If
» thou desirest children, frame them for thyself like
» an able craftsman in this workhouse of the hu-
» man race; if thou wilt have voluptuousness, here
» lies the spring from which gush out all the vo-
» luptuousnesses that wanton Venus is in the habit
» of seasoning with her blandishments and sports.
» Draw near this spring. The way to it is not too
» steep or rugged; neither is it wider than it ought
» to be for one journeying after love. Thou wouldst
» fancy it rather a passage than a road. Put thy
» horse to full speed upon it. He will amble, by
» Venus! at a jolly rate along it; he will not be
» galled with such needless drudgery, as he is at
» present. He is looking to see where he is to de-
» posit his incommodity; he will find out his way
» best by himself, if he only seeks it, provided
» thou lettest loose the reins. » Callias laughed, and :
« Here they are loose, » said he; « let him now
» steer as he likes : for the mentule is an
» ingenious beast, if ever there was one. »
Immediately he darted into the stable which
he found lying open for him, and a little while
after he was delivered of his burden, to the great
joy of both. Since those fits of a furious and
blind passion, Callias has not tempted any thing that

might seem offensive to me or indecent to either of us.

OTTAVIA. Now that our conversation is about those debaucheries, I beg thee, dear Tullia, if thou lovest me, to unbosom to me thy true feelings, and explain the whole thing clearly, how it originated, how it was welcomed by libertines, how it prospered, and, in short, how it was that it gained the affections of certain nations, while exercising no power over a great many others. I presume that this sulphureous flame was wafted from out the infernal regions, to contaminate with its pestiferous contact the sacred sparks of chaste affection,

... Wherever rove the Sun and Moon,

TULLIA. Thou understandest it rightly. That is exactly how it was. All men without distinction are influenced by the same passions, being all of the same matter and constructed alike. They are all equally inclined to licentiousness. Now, they give the name of pleasure to that peevish and vehement cupidity they have, not so much for the sake of imparting the supreme joy into another's body and spirits, as of receiving it from another's person. They are desperately fond of those parts of another's person; thanks to them, they procure themselves floods of lubricity, and shoot out of the very marrow in their bones that salacious

humour they style seed, which, when it flows into our field, engenders man. In this efflux, and thou art well aware of it, Ottavia, they find all the bliss they seek from us. The venereal vein drained, thou knowest how they loathe our goods; how they slight the kisses, embraces and other endearments of Venus; and how, being put to flight, they either retrograde, or become speechless, dull and blockish. In like manner, those who have just stuffed themselves with food and wine do not care a button for either wine or food. Now, men are born too inclined to love our sex, and too eager to enjoy our persons, as far as we are women, owing no doubt to the impulse of mother Nature. For it was in this way she assured us immortality, provided one sex coupled with the other. Yet that great quantity of seed which is concocted in the loins of men and women is not all necessarily destined to procreation. Such, it is said, is the opinion of the wise. These maintain that what holds good with respect to the seed of plants and trees holds good likewise respecting this seed. Take corn, for instance. Some of it goes to feed animals and is consumed by them; some is for sowing. When the use of the acorn was discontinued, Ceres taught mortals the art of making bread with corn, and it was called by the Latins *panis*, because people were in the habit of stamping the image of

Pan upon the loaves. This portion is appropriated to the stomach and delicates : and now who would dream of asserting that Nature is offended at it? Again, Nature of her own accord commits a part of the seeds of other plants, seeds which men have no need or desire to gather, to the soil whence new plants spring up, whilst she simply allows the remainder to be lost. The same argument, say Socrates and Plato, may be applied to the seed suitable to the reproduction of man, and it would be unreasonable to suppose that Nature had intended all this seed for the engendering of the human race. Moreover, she herself manifests her design. For, there is, Ottavia, a passage in our bodies for the seed, by which passage we may cast it from out our wombs, when we are big with child; this passage would not exist if it was the will of Queen Nature that the seed should serve for only one purpose. Now, the men eject it whenever they please and as they please; but they would undoubtedly have the power of spilling their seed only within our embraces and in that part of our body which was set aside for procreation, if this matter were solely destined to the framing of man. Then, when our teeming wombs swell, and pregnancy has attained the sixth, eighth and ninth month, nay, when we are languishing in the pains of delivery, they do not deny that our husbands

can rightfully meddle with us, and they really have the right. Now, what hope has any man left, in the above case, of procuring a woman a new impregnation unless he is mad even to dishonesty? Ottavia, thou knowest the conclusion to be drawn from these arguments.

OTTAVIA. I do.

TULLIA. Hence it is that the Doctors by introducing pessaries, as they phrase them, excite sickly girls to voluptuousness; that they disengage from the deep cavities the stagnant pools of rotten seed. These are a perpetual source of various diseases for unmarried girls. Yet people do not repudiate Medicine, and with a note of infamy brand the relief it affords as a criminal abuse. Thus we see those falling to decay recovered, and the dying recalled to life.

OTTAVIA. That is how cousin Livia recovered her health, she who, seven months before she got married, was so wan, so full of dirt, as it were, so livid and the true picture of death.

TULLIA. It was for these reasons, which glittered with a certain, though false, show of truth, that what was considered at first the excess of a few coy persons became at length the prevalent fashion in several countries. Men chose themselves women whose fields they entered more for the sake of begetting children than out of love. As

soon as they grew pregnant, they regarded them as reprobates; they cut off all communication with them; they hid them away in back rooms, nor did they deem them any longer worthy of their kisses or embraces. The title of mother was for the unfortunate creatures a continual source of contempt and reprobation. The Kings of Asia looked down upon our sex, as filth. Bagoas was the darling of Darius : he even inflamed Alexander. Subjects copy the Princes who govern them. They were all ruled by the same infamy in every sphere and state of life. Populace, magnates and Kings all, all were seized with a like fury. This infatuation caused Philip, king of Macedon, to be stabbed by the hand of Pausanias, to whom he had just offered violence. It subjected Julius Cæsar to King Nicomedes; it made him every man's woman, just as he was every woman's man. Augustus did not flee this dishonour. Tiberius and Nero gloried in it. Nero wedded Tigillinus, Sporus married Nero. A whole *pœdagogium* accompagnied Trajanus, the bravest of Princes, on his victorious expeditions in the East. What he styled his *pœdagogium* was a troop of handsome and comely youths, whom he called day and night to his arms. Antinous served Adrian as mistress; though he was Plotina's rival, yet he was happier than she. The emperor wept him dead, and now that he

had ceased to dwell with mortals, he ranked him among the gods, consecrating to him altars and temples. An ancient author relates that Antoninus Heliogabalus, nephew of Severus, used to receive Venus through « every hole in his body », and that his cotemporaries looked upon him as a monster. Even the awful majesty of Philosophy, accompanied by a choir of catamites, used to dance round that Venus. Alcibiades and Phædon were wont to sleep with Socrates, whenever they wanted to make their preceptor merry. It was from the amours of so saintly a man that this maxim had its origin : « Love with Socratic love. » All sects of Philosophers held the acts and sayings of Socrates as sacred. They built him a temple; they erected an altar to him. His acts became laws, his words, oracles. Philosophers did not depart from the example of their Hero, for Socrates was placed among the Heroes, and of their home-made god. Lycurgus, the Spartan legislator, had, a few centuries before Socrates' time, refused to admit that a man could be a good and useful citizen without having some friend for bed-fellow. He wanted to have the young virgins trained up stark naked upon the stage, before all men's eyes, in order that the over-freedom of the sight might contribute to damp the passion which, under the impulsion of nature, drives men to us, and that

it might become more ardent towards the lovers and companions of their own sex : for the things we are accustomed to see make little or no impression upon us. What about the poets? Anacreon was in love with Bathillus. Nearly all Plautus' pleasantries relate to this subject. Here a specimen of them :

I shall do as the boys, I shall bow my head against a box.

Again :

Did the soldier's dagger fit into thy sheath?

Well, that consummate master of the poetical art, I mean Maro, who was surnamed Parthenius on account of his coy and natural bashfulness, loved Alexander given to him by Pollio, and he sang his praises under the name of Alexis. Ovid contracted the same vice : yet he preferred girls to boys, because in these sorts of amusements he liked a reciprocal and not a selfish enjoyment. He said that he delighted in the love « which dissolves » on both sides ». Hence it was that « boy's love » affected him less. » Whenever girls and wives saw themselves neglected, the former by those they loved, the latter by those whose homes they entered through wedlock, because of their having served only as women, they then stooped to perform the boy's functions. Frenzy was carried to

such a pitch that even brides were forced to undergo this ignominy, as formerly the married women, it being but afterwards that they were to pass from the state of boy to that of girl and that both sexes were to be united in the same body. Priapus is represented, in an ancient epigram, as giving notice to the cole-wort stealer who would come near his peg, that he should offer him.

> What the maid offers her greedy husband on the first night,
> While the simple creature still dreads the wound of the other quarter.

Valerius Martial feigns, for painters and poets were always allowed an equal freedom of expressing themselves, that he hears his wife hinting to him that she too has buttocks, in order to dissuade the mad fellow from loving the boys. But he did not let himself be persuaded. The boy's office, said he, is one thing, and the woman's quite another. He ordered that the woman should discharge her own office. Now boys and girls used to be seated in the brothel-houses with bills and lamps placed above their heads; the former were decked in a long gown with objects of the female toilet; the latter were summarily attired in boy's clothes, and their faces made to resemble those of boys. Thus one sex passed off for the other. « All flesh hath cor » rupted its way. » Just fancy how often the boys

and the girls must have belied their sex. Here are Ganymede and Juno vying with each other in presenting Jupiter their buttocks, while each is extolling the superiority of the goods in his or her hind-treasury. Those who commented and talked over such things were not considered guilty of profanation or impiety; those who gave credit to them were not looked upon either as fools or libertines. Whither would not poor wretched men go when the Gods themselves lead the way? Ganymede was Jupiter's darling, Hyacinthus Apollo's, Hylas Hercules' :

> Who has not heard of Hylas?...

Jupiter is the god of Majesty, Apollo of Sciences, Hercules of Fortitude. Asia was the first cradle of this vice : nor did Africa quite escarpe this sort of pest, which, owing to its contagion, soon spread over all Greece and the adjoining countries of Europe. Orpheus introduced and encouraged the use of this feculent sport in Thracia : but the Ciconian matrons, seeing themselves despised,

> During the solemnities of the Gods and the orgies of nocturnal Bacchus,
> Strewed the country far and wide with the young man torn in pieces.

We are told that the Celts in olden times made laughing-stocks of those who kept safe from this

vice : they were allowed neither employments nor honours. Nay, those who preserved their morals pure were shunned as if they were infected with a plague. It is useless for one to be wise in a city where there is only madness : and since it is useless, it is altogether out of place.

OTTAVIA. Which of the most eloquent of men would surpass thee in utterance? How sincerely and ingeniously thou settest forth whatever thou statest!

TULLIA. Under the name of Celts were comprised not only those living on the other side of the Alps, in Gaul, but all those nations lying to the West, among which are Italy and Spain. Now, the Gauls, of all people, have the greatest abhorrence for this strange Venus; whenever any of them do make free with it, they get purified by the revengeful flames : they imagine that the sword is inadequate to the avenging of chastity. The Italians and Spaniards are surprised at them; now it is better say nothing of those people who groan under the Mahometan yoke. They pretend that the Gauls and those living in northern countries are insensible of pleasure; that it is only themselves who have the true smack of voluptuousness. Of course we women turn our countrymen's humours against ourselves, by making them seek elsewhere that enjoyment which they can not even find full and perfect with us.

OTTAVIA. I do not understand that.

TULLIA. Thou wilt understand it as well as I do. We Italian and Spanish women have (no fear of contradiction) Venus' doors too wide. Unless a man were extra-supplied and furnished with huge tools, he would be tempted to imagine that he was not performing the venereal act, but simply exercising himself at the javelin between the pillars of some spacious piazza. The conch that offers the traveller an easy admittance quite spoils the enjoyment. The mentule rejoices at being pressed and sucked; it does not feel at its ease when allowed to roam about too freely. The back Venus is therefore more advantageous in this respect. The invading mentule finds it of difficult access, and when the latter has forced its way in, it not only takes up the whole place but even chinks it. Consequently the capacity of the stade is just as the racer would have it. The local moreover suits the guest, as the muscles may be tightened or slackened at will. As for the vulva, when once turned into a frightful chasm, no art, no posture or movement on the woman's part will ever prevent its being slack, its being but a horribly gaping chasm for the wretched mentule, to the great disadvantage of copulation. Hence it is that the lovers of the vile pleasure are so plentiful among us, whilst they are so rare among the Gauls and

Germans. Now, the women of northern regions have not such wide doors. All their members are shrunk by the cold as if they were frozen. Since men have therefore all that is conducive to pleasure in the lawful union of their women, what would they covet beyond what they possess in store? In like manner, those who, in our own country, are endowed with means and well hung are not addicted to unnatural lust. This is what I wished to come at, Ottavia.

OTTAVIA. Thou hast forgotten to say whether thou approvest of or abhorrest this kind of Venus, as, by Hercules! I abominate it.

TULLIA. If I do approve of it, I am not in my wits. The fulminating voice from heaven, though the earth be silent, condemns this guilt. Lucian discourses very shrewdly on both Venuses without blaming either. So we can not tell which one he preferred. Achilles Tatius, in « The Loves of Clitophon and Leucippe », likewise couches his opinion in ambiguous terms, the peevish fellow. Both were Greeks. Not one of the Latin writers reproves or commends this unnatural lust. What is still more surprising, none of the legislators forbids it: doubtless they made no crime of pleasures which did not incur capital punishment. Be that as it may, I shall freely give my opinion on them without having recourse to any Socratic quibbling.

The posterior Venus deserves every species of torture and reprobation. The thoughts of one sex turn naturally to the other. He who seeks Venus in a boy offers violence to his own natural propensity. Cupid inspires love : who has ever committed unnatural crimes with Cupid? He would not commit them himself, or tolerate another to commit them with him. Youths, be they ever so inexperienced, preconceive in spite of them, from the moment the amorous flame begins to work in their veins, that the remedy for calming the fiery tempest is to be really had in women's embraces. A young girl sets a stripling on fire, a stripling sets a young girl on fire. They are possessed by mutual longings; one desires the other. Such is the course of love. Cupid tempers in this adverse spot the arrows which he shoots into tender breasts. One must be old at the business to turn them to another place. It is not Nature, but corrupt morals, that inspire depraved men with such furies. Had the inferior spot been meant for a like purpose, it would have been also adapted to it. The salacious nerve could enter into it without much trouble, without any danger for those coupling together. Girls may be deflowered even before they have attained to puberty, before they are strong enough for men. Of course they are obliged to suffer during the first assaults; but then

this suffering, which is soon succeded by the supreme pleasure, vanishes in a few hours. The case would be a far more serious one, if a girl or a boy were to undergo violence against Nature. Then the most poignant pains seize the oppressed one, and oftentimes, when too thick a spear cleaves him, there result from this abuse most foul diseases which all the skill of Æsculapius would not cure. It happens that, once the strings of the muscles are broken, the excrements run out even in spite of people. What is more disgusting than that? I have known noblewomen thus afflicted with such loathsome distempers caused by the breaking out and the running of ulcers, that they had as much as ever they could do to get over them in two or three years. I myself did not escape altogether safe and sound from the detestable arms of Aloisio and Fabrizio. First, while they were driving in their rammers, I underwent a dreadful torture; then the shadow of a slight titillation relieved me of my suffering. But when I got home, a very intense pain took me again in that spot which they had lacerated : I was being roasted by a prurient flame. And notwithstanding Dame Orsini's help the fire, sacred to those rascals, was with difficulty extinguished. I was doomed to a dismal death had my wounds been neglected. Thou, Ottavia, couldst not have been brought so soon

to Venus in the early days of thy puberty, owing to thy being so tender and delicate. When thou didst come to the age of full puberty, thou didst mar, almost unhurt, every brunt from a mighty stiff and thick dagger. Now, what would have become of thee, I shudder at the idea of it, had so bulky a catapult vented its furies on another part of thy body? I am not moved by the arguments which those enemies of the human race, those buggerers and catamites adduce, in defence of their cause, from nature, morals, or from the dignity or renown of certain men. No sensible man would suppose that the wilful loss of the human seed is free from all stain of infamy, or that the losing of man, for instance, ought not to be considered a villany. Whoever is unwilling to cast his seed into the female furrow intends to lose a man, or that which might become a man : he is a homicide and an adulterer. Men are killed even before they are born through this purulent pleasure. The refusing to give life is but the taking away of life. When Nature is working in her secret cells at the production of seed, her chief aim is procreation and not lechery. Her intention was that woman and man should meet together in each other's embraces, lest the former might be dissuated from it by the pains of delivery, and the latter by the care of bringing up children. By the endearing charms

of a dear pleasure, she attracts them to procreation, which they would shun in its bare and solitary state. « But, » quoth they, « who would deny that » the seed which is thrown into a pregnant woman's » furrow is lost? » Nonsense! Doctors state that a pregnant woman may conceive a second time, in case she copulates. They therefore cite the example of a woman who, after having given birth to a child, became, notwithstanding, mother of a second child a few days after : they term it superfetation. Who would not intrust the omnipotent creator Nature with the materials out of which she may thus produce the works she is wont do frame? Who would not trust Nature? Now, corn and the like are not seed, as people say in jest, but perfect fruits which contain their own seed in themselves, by the vigour and faculty of which they grow again. The bull, the ram, the cock are likewise animals of absolute perfection, each according to its kind. Who would have us refuse to eat them, because they contain in them, for instance, the vital seed which was provided for the continuance of their respective species? Nature is not wronged by it : the most perspicacious sects of Philosophers have granted that there is really no harm in making use of and eating corn and fruits.

OTTAVIA. It is all very fine; but morals justified

by long custom, and great men of every age disagree with thee.

TULLIA. Bad manners will by no lengh of time acquire the authority that is due to good manners. Murders, thefts and poisonings have been ever since the foundation of the world so many species of crimes. Who would on that account commend or boast of them? It is nothing new to see States and cities laid vaste by pestilences and cruel catching diseases, whole families completely extinguished : who would deny that pests and diseases are evils, because they have proceeded from creation down to us in an uninterrupted series of calamities? Things must be judged after the things themselves, and not after their accidents. Therefore, as the long continuance of time does not in the least palliate infamy, so the praises of the most celebrated men are of no avail either to the glorification of debauchery. While shining aloft, they let themselves be obscured by those clouds; they allowed these furies to hurl them down from the pinnacle of their glory. Still, this poison did not infect all those who have enjoyed a high reputation of honour and fame. Most of them, thou mayst be sure, preserved themselves safe from a like infection. Although this gloomy torrent sweeps over certain lands, yet most people, if thou takest into account the magnates, the populace and all

classes, are untained by it; so horrible a vice has no effect upon their virtue, which knows no guilt. In fine, if thou wilt judge rightly and wisely, thou must judge the things after the things themselves, and not after their accidents.

OTTAVIA. I do not wonder the look of that La Tour of thine, who showed himself adverse to this style of lechery, delighted thine eyes so much, since thou art a holy and grave woman.

TULLIA. I now resume the story which that eagerness to chat interrupted, thou silly creature : for thou remindest me of it. La Tour came next after Aloisio and Fabrizio. « What indulgence » must be thine, dear goddess, to suffer so fair a » body to be polluted and outraged in its celestial » beauty? Shall I go, » said he, « and avenge the » honour which is due to thy beauty and majesty, » and which they have stained? Shall my aven- » geful hand slay both in sacrifice at thy altars, » dear goddess, for thou shalt be always a goddess » to me? » — « Ho, » I replied; « I knew on what » condition I entered this palæstra. They have » used their right. Yet I am grateful for thy gene- » rous sentiments. I love thee the more ardently » as I hate them the more vehemently. » At these words. Ottavia, he gave me a smack that Venus herself would seem to have honied over with her lascivious seductions. I had got out of bed; I was

naked; he was already erected. No loitering; he seized a breast with each hand, and brandishing the glowing hard dart between my thighs : — « Be- » hold, Madam! » said he, « how this weapon is » making for thee, not to cause thee death, but » all sorts of delights. Act thyself, I pray thee, » as guide to the stone-blind mentule along this » blind lane, that it may not miss the mark : I » would fain not remove my hands from the bliss » they are enjoying. » I did as he desired me. I applied the fiery dart to the red-hot orifice. He felt it; he pushed; he entered. Truly, voluptuousness is more exquisite in the arms of him that pleases one than in those of any other man, be he ever so enticing and meretricious. At the second thrust, I melted away with such incredible titillation that for a moment my hams were very near failing me. « Stop, » said I, « my running soul! » — « I know through where it is running, » he replied, smiling. « Thou imaginest perhaps that it » is going to creep out through this nether-door » which I am defending; but see how thorougly » I have it barred against it. » As he spoke, he so contrived by some supreme contention of mind that the turgescent mentule increased in bulk. « And I shall drive back thy fugitive soul, » he added; so he made very brisk assaults at it. The dagger sank deeper to the quick. He accumulated

sweet thrusts upon sweet thrusts, he passed through delicious furies with such violence that, seeing the whole body certainly could not enter my person through that place, he at least diffused into it by his lascivious efforts all his desires, wants, humours and frenzied mind. At length, on perceiving the ecstasy of the humid tide approaching, he slipped his hands under my posteriors and held them up in the air. While grasping his frantic body most tightly with my arms, I twined my thighs and shanks alternately round his thighs and butt : so that reared from the ground I clung to his neck. Thus I hung as if I were nailed to him. Whilst the operation was being protracted, I fell again into a trance, I who was no laggard. Being seized by too fierce an amorous rage, I could not refrain from shouting : « I feel all... I feel all the » delights of Juno when in conjunction with Jove! » I am carried off to heaven! » — « Dear goddess, » replied Conrad, « do not desert us mortals until » thou hast satisfied thy own Conrad with thy » venereal charms, and made him a partaker of » thy immortality and bliss. » At the same instant, La Tour, whom Venus and Cupid were inciting to lust by all their stimulants, besprinkled the genital field with the moistening fire of overflowing seed. The encircling ivy does not cling so closely to the walnut-tree as I clung to La Tour with my

entwining arms and thighs. He had scarcely finished when Conrad came up. « What! » he cried, « shall » I pine away there by myself? For those scoundrels » of Florentines are gone off. I know not where their » bad genius has led them. »

OTTAVIA. Would they had gone to be gibbeted, they who served thee as a gibbet with their inordinate passions!

TULLIA. Being heavy and drowsy, they had gone out into a neighbouring grove with its verdant lindens and holms, to recover their spent and languishing strength in the open air. Conrad addressed me seated on the bed in these words : « I am a German, and I grieve at the nasty trick » those ruffians have put upon thee. Please to » know that I am no less exasperated than La » Tour. Now tell me what is to be done, if indeed » thou hast taken it to heart. Thou art silent? » I actually was silent, for La Tour had just retired. « I shall, » said he, « let it all out to thee in good » faith. » And thereupon he let out his mentule which was capering in a singular manner for my thighs.

OTTAVIA. And that is how he let the cat out of the bag. Therefore no stop, no respite! And he required the fourteenth trial of thee, thee a Heroine of Herculean bravery.

TULLIA. Conrad did not displease or please me

very much : so I neither refused nor gave. He took what he liked as from one asleep; I did not even reply to his soft words. I tell thee what, dear Ottavia : the very blood in my veins being exhausted of its vital heat by so many onsets, I was as little moved as if my wasted strength was charging the blooming young man with the remissness of decrepit old age. But he devised a new posture nor was it a silly one either. As I lay with my face upward he lifted my right thigh over his left shoulder; then he gave the expected though not desired transpiercing stroke. He now set my left thigh upon his right thigh. Having buried the weapon in the secret regions, he began to flutter, agitate and push. In short, imagine the rest thyself.

OTTAVIA. Did Aloisio and Fabrizio, when called back to their task and duty, satisfy thee in thy soul and conscience?

TULLIA. There would be no end to the story if I were to enter into all the particulars. Conrad enjoyed six times; Aloisio and Fabrizio, the former five times, the latter seven; La Tour arrived likewise at the seventh enjoyment. Thus I sustained some twenty five battles and came off victorious : they all confessed that Venus ought to crown my brow with a garland of laurels, for having militated and fought so happily in her honour. Withal, doubt it not, Ottavia : after undergoing

so many trials and after losing so much blood, my forces had almost failed me. I had as much as ever I could do to rise to my feet after the twentieth coition; and yet I carried the day.

OTTAVIA. Tired of men though not satiated, eh?

TULLIA. Both satiated and tired. As La Tour was the first to begin battle, he also put an end to it. The victorious prize was awarded him with my sanction. This young nobleman and valiant champion even obtained from me that I should give him my nam and address and consent to his coming to visit me. He did indeed visit me most frequently afterwards. But I had grown so heartily sick of Venus, that I admitted the desirous and inflamed fellow to my embraces only twice during three whole months, being then prevailed upon by his tears, petitions and earnest supplications.

OTTAVIA. Whence arose that disinclination?

TULLIA. I was turned into a lake of genital rain. The overflowing matter had by force of diluting so loosed the ligaments of my vulva and quenched the whole fire, that not a single lustful thought came the while to provoke me to lasciviousness. At length, I suffered my lover of fresh and rosy youth to get out of me the supreme enjoyment. I gave nothing, nor rightly felt anything either. But, when that nausea had nestled within the loins of

my benumbed Venus, we served each other as a sort of vehicle to recall and repeat the sports which seemed already far from us. I shall state in its own time, Ottavia, every thing that concerned us during a whole year. Thou shalt hear joyous things to excite thy curiosity; thou shalt hear lamentable ones to move thee to pity and sorrow. La Tour was snatched away from me by means of Aloisio's treachery. Alas! alas! why did that same treachery, which laid him low, leave wretched me alive?

OTTAVIA. Turn thy mind from this sad remembrance to something more pleasant. Say, Tullia : are there still other modes of making love besides those thou hast tried? Good Venus! how many shapes didst thou take in order to please!

TULLIA. There are as many ways of doing Venus as the body has windings and alterations. It is impossible to compute or indicate those that are best qualified for pleasure. Each one regulates the shape he wishes to take after his humour, place and leisure. Love however is not the same for all. Elephantis, a young Greek lady, represented in paintings the postures which she knew to be fashionable among libertines, that they might be henceforth pleased « to execute the business after the pictures. » Another devised twelve different ways of copulating, ways calculated to afford the

filter the greatest possible amount of voluptuousness. On this account they called her *Dodecamechanos*. In our own time, a man of divine genius, Pietro Aretino, has described very many of them in his witty satirical Dialogues (1); after him, the unrivalled painters, Tiziano and Caracchio, have represented them in painting. Yet several of them are impracticable, although the limbs and loins of those coupling together in generation be flexible, beyond the power of imagination. Of course, by force of meditating and reflecting, more ideas present themselves to the mind than can be realized. As nothing resists the desires of an impetuous mind, so nothing is difficult for an enthusiastic, disorderly imagination. It insinuates itself into wherever it pleases, and that by whichever way it adventures; it finds, for instance, a level road where there are only precipices. Every thing that right or wrong minded people counsel is not so easily performed by the body.

OTTAVIA. As there is only one Venus, there is only one way to do Venus. All the others, which men and women have invented, when carried away by the rage and fire of their passions, are depraving and criminal.

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(1) The *Ragionamenti*.

TULLIA. Some state that the way to do love according to the prescription of Nature is, that the woman should bow herself down and extend her loins after the manner of quadrupeds; that the virile coulter is thus conveyed more readily into the female furrow, as well as the flood of seed into the genital field :

Women, as a general rule, conceive better after the manner of
Quadrupeds, because, on lowering their chests and raising their
Loins, they are thus enabled to receive the seed into their cavities.
Spouses have no earthly need of wanton movements,
For the wife prevents herself from conceiving and thwarts
With her buttocks the husband's Venus, if she gayly withdraws them,
And discolating her whole chest, she repels the billows.
Thus she casts the coulter out of the furrow and right route,
And turns the jet of seed away from the mark.
Whores are accustomed to make these movements, for their own sake,
For fear of becoming often big-bellied and lying-in,
And also to afford men greater pleasure :
It would seem our wives have no need of the like (1).

Others highly approve of the common custom and posture, namely, that the woman should stretch herself flat with a close union of breasts and

(1) Lucretius, « *De Rerum Natura* », lib. IV, v. 1.253, etc.

bellies; while playing pubis against pubis the stiff wedge should cleave the tender slit. The latter command the women to make frequent and brisk bounces, whilst the former order them to abstain from them. Each opinion is to be respected. Yet Doctors are opposed to copulation in a prone state; it is, they say, contrary to the formation of the parts destined to procreation. As for me, dear Ottavia, I greatly appreciate the common custom.

OTTAVIA. Why not? Pray, what can one imagine more delightful than a woman lying upon her back under the endearing weight of the beloved body, which is stimulating her unto the wanton furies of a troubled though luscious lasciviousness? What is more pleasant than to feast on the face, kisses, heart-fetched sighs and the vivacity of his wild eyes? What is finer than to cherish his flames in one's arms, to partake even of his feelings, which neither age nor vice has numbed? What is more agreeable to each of their pleasure and voluptuousness than these to and fro lascivious motitations? What is more in place for those dying of voluptuousness, than to be vivified by the ardent influence of burning kisses? Whoever enjoys Venus with her back to him gratifies only one of his senses : whercas he who enjoys her face to face gratifies all his senses.

TULLIA. But it is usually with these things, Ottavia as with the happiest people in vogue. Thou mayst see some of them, after having despised very handsome wives, run after two-penny whores and amuse themselves with the most rotten amours, as if they were disgusted with the great supply of goods they have about them. Others have a satiety and aversion for symptuous banquets, rich suppers; on disregarding Falerno and dainties, they stuff themselves with palled wine and brown bread, like starved creatures. We delight in what we are unaccustomed to, whilst we rush upon what is forbidden.

But see how we have spent a sleepless night, while thou hast been amusing thyself and I talking. We must rise in a few hours. A good sleep will do us no harm, and indeed thou hast need of rest. Sleep therefore, Ottavia, as pleasantly as thou hast kept awake; Venus grant it!

END

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